METHODIST ALTARS

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METHODIST ALTARS

NEW EDITION

by

DESSIE ASH ARNETT
LENACE ROBINETTE CLARK

Original symbol drawings by Nancy Clark Maddox

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By Dessie Ash Arnett, Lenace Robinette Clark and Betty Isaac Stewart.

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LENACE ROBINETTE CLARK

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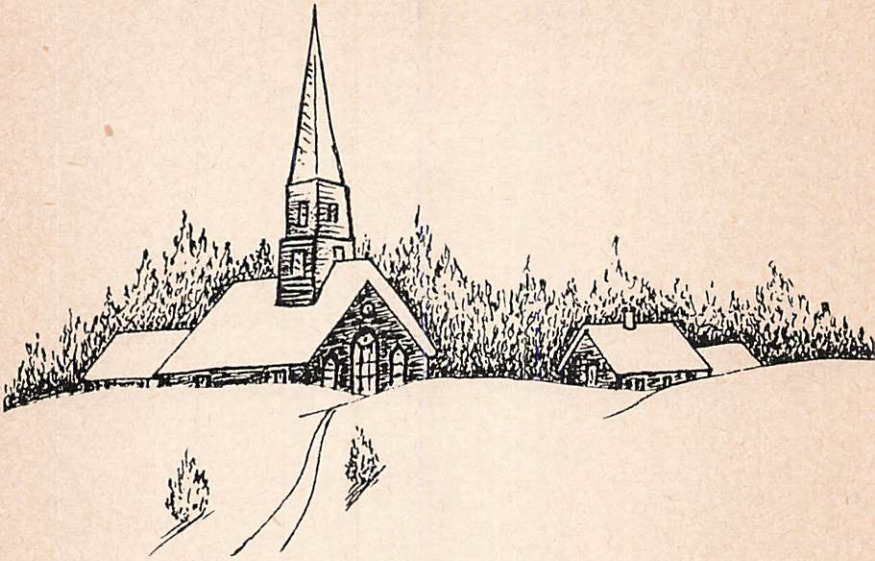

CHURCH ALTARS

From city streets and country lanes
Against the peaceful skies
We see the upward-pointing spires
Of friendly churches rise.

And from their altars there ascends
Like incense rising sweet
The hopes and prayers of humankind—
Where love and mercy meet.

So may the sacred hush we feel
In quietness and calm,
Renew our souls and fill our hearts
With one unending psalm!

—J. E. THOMAS

To all who worship at

Methodist Altars

and

in loving memory of

Alma

PREFACE

TEN YEARS have gone by since this book began to take shape. It was first a need felt by a group of women who had been depending upon material from other denominational publishers as a guide for their work as an Altar Guild. Three members of the group decided to work together to prepare something for local use. Our first effort resulted in a small manual containing a brief outline of the duties of an Altar Guild in the Methodist Church, some material on Symbols, the Church Calendar, and the seasonal colors. We thought a long time before printing five hundred copies, for what in the world would we do with so many!

Much to our surprise, there were others beside ourselves who were looking for some kind of Methodist guide for the committee whose duty it was to care for the altar and chancel. In some manner, our little manual found its way to the shelves of the Methodist Book Room and was listed for sale in the Methodist catalog. Letters and inquiries began to come, more printing had to be done, and soon we woke up to the fact that we had started a task which, if we were to continue, required a training much more adequate than ours had been, and a better understanding of Methodism and our Christian heritage.

So we began to study, not only books but buildings. A church spire in the distance as we drove across the country was a challenge; we just had to stop and see what was there! If we were in a city for a day or two, our friends knew they might as well resign themselves to waiting while we made a tour of some of the churches. If it happened to be a guided tour, we took advantage of the situation to ask questions, often making nuisances of ourselves, I suppose, as we asked, "Where do you store your linens? Where do you prepare the elements for Holy Communion? Who cares for your Altar and chancel?" etc.

One cannot ask these questions many times without becoming more convinced than ever that Methodist Churches need to give more attention to the care of the Altar, or Lord's table, both in building plans and in every day practice. We had an opportunity to see the contrast between churches that had a trained group of women for this work and those in which it was done haphazardly. Ministers who had the assistance of well trained Altar Guilds were generous in their appreciation of their work.

There were so many inspiring and encouraging experiences as we felt the influence of wonderful Christian fellowship in the Methodist Church; as over and over we walked into a church and the very atmosphere seemed to say, "Surely this is the House of God". There was so much that was good that one hesitates to inject a negative note. But once in a while there was a church that seemed to lack something. One had the feeling that it had been built "backward" with the first concern being to erect a beautiful building, the second purpose, to make the interior as comfortable and convenient as possible for everyone, and then as an after thought, *if* there was enough money left and a space where it would look "nice", to put in an altar. For what reason, one couldn't tell, for the layer of dust on everything, the green wax drippings on the candlesticks, and the hymnals stacked on the end of the altar didn't indicate any very important use.

Perhaps that is not a kind criticism; perhaps the fault lay with our wrong response to the building. It could have been the effect of having been taken first through the beautifully furnished fellowship rooms and well equipped educational building, the recreation rooms of which the church was so proud, the modern kitchen with its gleaming equipment and everything as clean as a pin. Or it just might mean that we are too critical,—but anyway, the walls *do* speak, and sometimes they tell more than we want them to.

The reward of these ten years' work has been beyond words to express! It has led to blessings that we did not expect. We began with an emphasis on the lowliest and seemingly the

least important phase of Christian work,—care of the material objects, scrubbing floors, keeping the dust off the furnishings, keeping the church *clean* and beautiful with colored hangings and flowers. But in all humility, I believe the thought behind this was, "for the glory of God". Sometimes along with this thought there was an uneasy feeling that we might become "unspiritual" by centering our attention too much on the material. You see, like many other Christians we had somehow gotten the idea that there was no relation between the material and the spiritual; that the physical world was outside the realm of God's interest.

Strange to say, as we worked with the material, the spiritual became more of a reality. As we looked at the visible, we found the invisible coming into the picture. And a truth began to unfold that is expressed through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, that God has always chosen to use the *material* as a vehicle through which the *spiritual* is made known to us in this present life. The spirit functions in this world through the physical. We began to better understand the words of the creed that we had recited so many times: "I believe in One God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth *and of all things visible and invisible,*" and to remember that, "God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good." The words of the psalmist took on new meaning as we read, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth showeth His handiwork." The entire universe was seen as sacramental in its nature,—an "outward and visible expression of an invisible and spiritual creation."

And the supreme revelation of God: ". . . *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us* . . . and we beheld his glory . . ."!

We seem to have gone far afield from where we started,—with the simple duties of an Altar Guild. But we have not, really. We can go back to our duties with a new appreciation, knowing that in a very humble way, we are *witnessing* by helping to provide a physical setting in the church which says, "One greater than the temple is here."

Likewise, in writing this book, we seem to have gone far beyond our original purpose which was to provide a manual of instructions, telling how the work of an Altar Guild should be done. But we feel that the "how" should be supplemented by the "why",—so this book is intended to serve a double purpose. It is both a study book to aid in a better understanding of our Christian heritage and the meaning of liturgy and corporate worship and also a manual of instructions for Altar Guilds.

Through Methodist Altars we have made many wonderful friends. Ministers and Church leaders have been more than generous in their assistance and encouragement. They have contributed to our understanding and appreciation of the meaning of corporate worship through books, teaching and through Christian fellowship. We would like to name all who have helped, but the list is too long. But we are debtors to many and we offer this edition of Methodist Altars knowing that all of you have had a part in it.

To each of you we say a sincere and heartfelt "Thank you!"

—Dessie Ash Arnett

Orlando, Florida
Oct. 1, 1961

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The pen sketch and poem, "Church Altars" was written, by James Egbert Thomas, Charleston, West Virginia, now deceased.

And finally, we remember with deep appreciation the work of the late Mr. Walter E. Clark, without whose help the early part of our work could not have been accomplished.

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* Altar Guild pins may be obtained for one dollar each. Order from: Lenace Robinette Clark, 1025 Oakmont Road, Charleston 4, W. Va.

First Methodist Church, Upland, California.

INTRODUCTION

Why Methodists Care For Their Altars

By the Rev. William F. Dunkle, Jr.

STRICTLY DEFINED an altar is a place of *sacrifice.* Sacrifice, also strictly defined, means "sacred slaughter" or an offering for sacred purposes.

Primitive religions, both ancient and contemporary, have sacrificed animals and even human beings on altars. For Christians, however, an altar is a place to offer up the "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," to use the language of an ancient Communion prayer. Holy Communion is the greatest act of faith by which Christians express this spiritual sacrifice of devotion. To use again the language of the Communion Service, Christians say to God as they kneel before a Communion altar, "Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living *sacrifice* unto Thee . . ."

Protestants are convinced that a basic error of Roman Catholic teaching is the dogma that the sacrifice offered on the altar at Holy Communion is Jesus Christ all over again, that His crucifixion is repeated each time a priest celebrates the Communion Mass or breaks the Communion Bread. This is why the old English Protestant prayer of consecration describes our Lord's crucifixion as ". . . the one offering of Himself, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world . . ." We believe that the sacrifice of Jesus on His cross was a single, complete, and unique act and that the only sacrifice we can offer on any altar now is our humble thanks. This is why Holy Communion is often called the Eucharist, the Greek word for *thanksgiving.*

Methodists do not offer the sacrifice of humble thanksgiving before their altars in Holy Communion only, however. Millions of Methodists have "come to the altar" or responded to an "altar

call" whenever their hearts have been deeply moved, "strangely warmed," or sincerely penitent. This is why many Methodists have thought of an altar as the communion railing, or the whole pulpit platform, or simply the front of a church's interior—the place where people kneel or come forward to offer their faith.

It is true, then, that the word altar can have many meanings. It is to be hoped that every Christian has an altar in his heart where daily thanksgiving and dedication is offered and where pride and selfishness are sacrificed. It is also hoped that in every Methodist church there is a place for penitents to kneel in contrition or for worshipers to bow in gratitude whether a Communion is being observed or not. In that sense every pew may be an altar.

But in a special way we associate an altar with the Holy Communion. Perhaps we call it a Communion Table or, better still use the old English phrase *Holy Table.* Possibly the conception of sacrifice may be better symbolized when the altar is against the wall or in front of a curtain or carving so that the minister stands before it to pray as a representative of all his praying people. However there is a present trend toward restoring the Holy Table to the center of the church moving it out from a rear wall into the middle of the chancel. This is being called today a "free standing altar" and increasingly is the new fashion in church arrangements. With the minister standing behind the Table and facing his people, it is felt that this symbolizes all the congregation gathered around God's Table to offer together their common sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Some very modern churches are now being built "in the round" with the altar at the very center and the pews installed around it.

The architecture of an altar, however, is not the most important fact about it. Wherever it may be located in a church, it should be the central symbol of human faith reaching toward God's goodness. When a cross is placed on or over a Holy Table, when lovely flowers or joyous candlelights are placed on it, or when fine fabrics or carvings adorn it, significant symbolic meaning may be added.

Actually, of course, there is nothing sacred about an altar itself, however it may be adorned. It is made of wood or stone, usually, no different in nature from any other piece of furniture made of wood or stone. It would be idolatrous to suppose otherwise. Nevertheless, an American flag means more to patriots than the cloth of which it is made, and similarly an altar is regarded with special reverence by Christians. It is not just a place to pile books and papers or something to use for the secretary's desk at a meeting. The profound spiritual purposes for which an altar is used give it added significance as a church furnishing. It is important, then, for Methodists to tend their altars with care and to treat them with sincere respect. This is what this little book helps us do.

—WILLIAM FREDERICK DUNKLE, JR.

Grace Methodist Church
Wilmington, Delaware
(June 5, 1961)

Elizabeth Memorial Methodist Church, Charleston, West Virginia.
"Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy!"
Psalm 43:4

IN HIS NAME

At this Altar made of wood,
Let Thy Church be gathered oft',
Ever, Lord, to seek Thy truths
That through Thy Son were wrought.

May the troubled here find rest,
And seeds of love be sown
That know no boundaries, East or West,
But make all nations truly one.

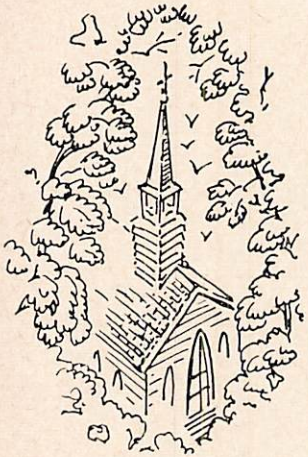
May we heed, O Lord, Thy call,
"Come unto Me, ye weary one,"
O restful promise, precious words,
Whosoever will may come.

Be present, at this Altar, Lord,
While in fellowship we feast
In memory of Thy dear Son,
Jesus Christ, our own High Priest.

—LENACE ROBINETTE CLARK

SILENT SERMONS

Churches are sermons in themselves!



From the smallest wayside chapel to the loftiest cathedral, they stand as silent witnesses to man's faith in God. They tell of his belief in prayer and his need for fellowship with other believers.

The tall spire points upward to the One True God.

The tower tells of God as our refuge and protection.

The bell rings to call us to service and to remind us of God's priority in our lives.

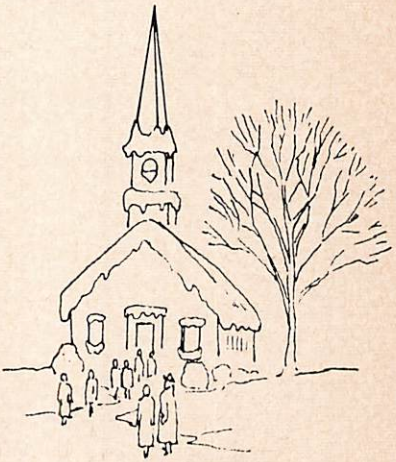
The stained glass windows portray great spiritual truths.

The cross on the spire witnesses to the price of man's redemption and his hope of eternal life through his resurrected Lord.

Churches are sermons in themselves!

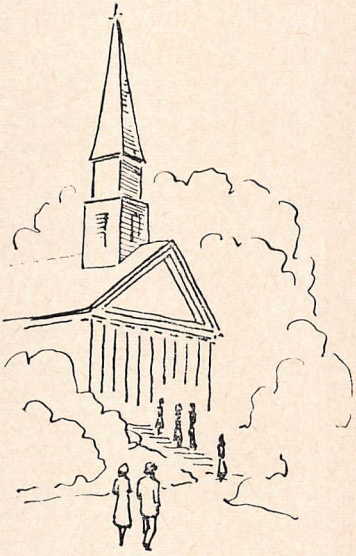
They say, "Lift up your hearts!" And our response is, "We lift them up unto the Lord."

Many things go into the building of a church. We see the beautiful structure of brick or stone, the stained glass windows, the beckoning doors, but woven into the fabric of the building are many things we cannot see. They are the hopes and



dreams and prayers and the sacrificial gifts which have made the building possible.

Every place of worship is an outward expression of something that already exists in human hearts and minds. When Jacob said, "How awesome is this place! Surely this is the House of God and this is the gate of Heaven", no sign of a building was there. But immediately afterward, Jacob took a stone and built an altar and called it Bethel. So are our churches built, first in our hearts, then on the ground.



Churches are dedicated buildings; dedicated "to the glory of God, and for the service of men . . . for worship, for preaching and for the celebration of the Holy Sacraments". (Discipline)

Surely no other building can have so much meaning and significance as one built in such manner and dedicated to such sacred purpose.

How lovely is thy Dwelling Place, Oh Lord of Hosts!

Psalm 84:1

"The Church's One Foundation"

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation by water and the word:
From heav'n he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from ev'ry nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation, One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses, with ev'ry grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder men see her sore opprest,
By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distrest;
Yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, "How Long?"
And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.

'Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God, the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly, On high may dwell with thee. AMEN.

—Samuel Wesley, 1864 (Hymnal)

Chapter I

The Church

". . . Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself up for it, to consecrate it, cleansing it by water and word, so that he might present the Church to himself all glorious, with no spot or wrinkle or anything of the sort, but holy without spot or blemish." *(New English Bible, Eph. 5:25-27.)

IT MAY be a bit unorthodox to write an entire book and then attempt to write the first chapter, but that is the way this book is being written. Throughout the book, "church" is used to refer to a building, a house of worship. But that is using the word in a restricted sense, and there has been a growing conviction that before we can appreciate the meaning of "church" in its lesser meaning, we need to look at the larger meaning of the word.

"Church" may mean a building or it may mean people. And of course the people are more important than the building. The newspaper this morning carried a story of a fire that had entirely destroyed a beautiful old church building that had stood as a lighthouse in the heart of a large city for many years. But the Church is still there! The fire did not destroy it.

If we should try to define the Church in terms of the organization as we know it, or as many organizations throughout the world,—or even if all these organizations were united in one great Church,—the definition would still fall far short of the full meaning of the word, for the Church is an invisible, spiritual reality only partially realized in the visible church on earth.

The Church is the company of all faithful believers, including all who are now living, all who have lived in the past, and all those yet unborn. It is not man's invention, but God's creation, and as such is a living organism and not an organization. The Church as we know it in this present world is a human-Divine organization which is the visible expression of the true Church; and partakes of the sins and imperfections of this world as well as of the nature of the heavenly world.

Membership in the true Church does not come about by "joining" an organization, but by a new birth,—a creative act whereby God regenerates and bestows the gift of a new life, and we become new creatures in Christ. While this new life is a free gift of God received through faith, the rite of baptism has been instituted by Christ, as the outward and visible expression of our faith and as a sign and seal of our redemption.

God has provided other outward means of grace for the development of this new life and for the strengthening and healing of his church. Among these are the Lord's Supper, the laying on of hands, and annointing with oil.

By making use of these symbolic rites we are not only exercising a privilege but following our Lord in precept and example.

The Church is holy, not because its members are holy, but because it is Christ's Church and he is holy. Christ and the Church cannot be separated. Without him, it has no beginning; apart from him, it has no life; for Christ is the source of the life of the Church, bestowed through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament gives breath-taking pictures of what the true Church is and what the Church on earth should be. These are given by means of symbolic language which is the only medium through which such spiritual truths can be communicated to us.

The Church is the mystical Body of Christ, with Christ as the head of the body and every believer a member, or as the New English translation expresses it, a "limb" or "organ" of the body. The members are so closely knit together that the concern of

one is the concern of all. In St. Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth he writes: "For just as the body is one and has many members, so it is with Christ . . . Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it, . . . If one member suffers, all suffer; if one member rejoices, all rejoice together."

Now, if the Church is truly the Body of Christ, the instrument through which he speaks and acts and makes himself known in the world today, what can we believe but that the Church is the extension of the incarnation. That Christ is as truly present in his Body today as he was in his physical body. That the same power should be manifested in the Church as was manifested in Christ, and the same "mighty works" performed as were witnessed during his earthly ministry.

While the Church falls far short of measuring up to the perfect pattern, it is unique in its power for good, in its enduring quality, and in its wonderful fellowship throughout the earth. It is God's instrument through which he works for the salvation of the world, and within it is found the company of believers that constitute the true Church. That it realizes its own need is indicated by the prayer that is so often offered:

"O Gracious Father, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church; that thou wouldest be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, establish it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of him who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen."

That the Church realizes its true nature and calling is indicated by the words in which we declare our faith at each worship service, "I believe in . . . the holy Catholic Church".

O where are kings and empires now
Of old that went and came?
But Lord, thy Church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same.

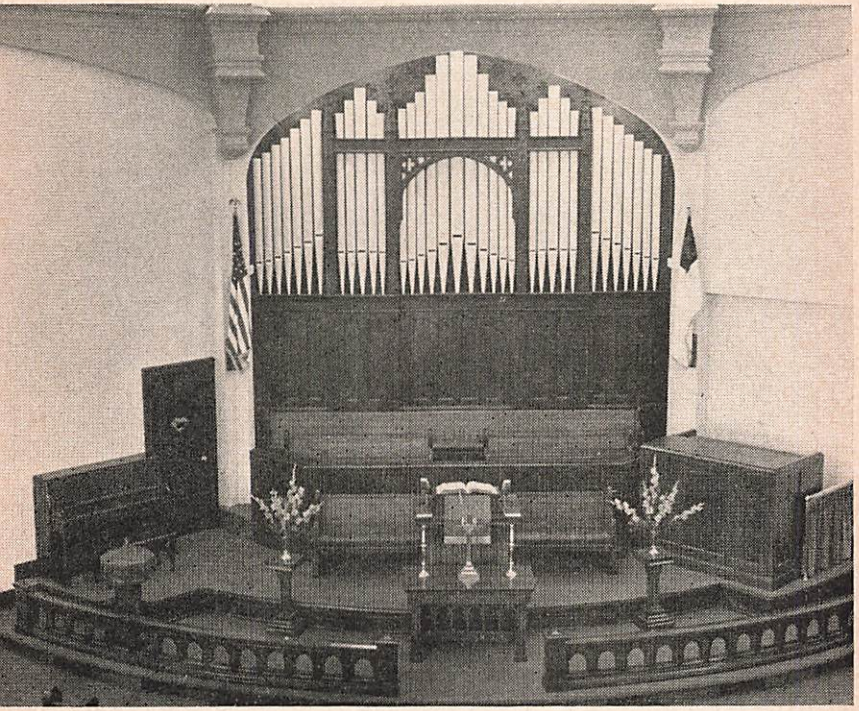
We mark the goodly battlements
And her foundations strong;
We hear within, the solemn voice
Of her unending song.

For not like kingdoms of the world
Thy holy Church, O God,
Though earthquake shocks are threatening her,
And tempests are abroad.

Unshaken as eternal hills
Immovable she stands,
A mountain that shall fill the earth,
A house not made with hands."

A. C. Coxe 1839. (Hymnal.)

So then, you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built into it, for a dwelling place of God in the spirit.—R. V. Eph. 2:19-22.



Central Methodist Church, Charleston, West Virginia.

theme of the worship service. Seasonal hangings and/or Bible book marks may be used on the pulpit.

The altar in this type building is the Communion table which is usually placed directly in front of and below the pulpit, on a level, or nearly so, with the congregation. Its position indicates that all persons, regardless of race or position in life, meet on a common level in fellowship around the Lord's table to partake of the sacred elements.

While more freedom is allowed in the furnishing and arrangement of a church of this kind than one built on more "churchly" lines, it is important that nothing be placed on the Communion

table that does not have significance and purpose in the worship service. When Holy Communion is being observed, the table must, of course, be covered with a fair linen cloth. At other times a scarf of plain white linen, or one of silk or similar fabric, in color harmonizing with the seasonal color on the pulpit, may be used. (Some ministers prefer not to have a cover used when there is no Communion service.)

An altar set—the cross and candles, or the cross alone—may properly be used on the Communion table, or flowers, symbolizing the resurrection, are sometimes placed on the table.

Often the Communion rail, which extends well across the room in front of the Communion table, and at which the Communion elements are received, is referred to as the "altar". It seems a fitting term if we think of an altar as a place of prayer, but the real meaning of "altar" is the table on which the Communion elements are consecrated.

Regardless of what form the altar takes, or where it is placed in the church, it is always the most honored object among the church furnishings, and should be cared for reverently.

The liturgical-type church is built on more traditional lines and often follows the Gothic style of architecture, or some adaptation of it. It emphasizes straight lines, length and height instead of width, and pointed arches. It is the church of the central aisle and central altar. It is the style of the great Cathedrals, but is equally well adapted to the small parish church. Such a church gives the impression of having been built primarily for worship instead of public speaking.

In order to be able to better interpret the symbolism of Methodist churches which are built on liturgical lines, let us consider that of some strictly liturgical churches. For instance, the Lutheran and Episcopal churches have a more uniform plan for their buildings, and more definite teaching concerning the symbolism which has been incorporated into the teaching of the Church over long centuries of Christian worship.

Altar Guilds often find it helpful in the study of Church Symbolism to visit some of these churches. Perhaps we could put our imagination to work and pay a make-believe visit to one of these churches. The Episcopal Church is the Mother of Methodism, and has given us John and Charles Wesley, and we share a common faith in the fundamental doctrines of the Church. Also, the Episcopal Church building is perhaps richer in symbolism than any other protestant group, so let's visit an Episcopal Church.

As we turn into the churchyard and up the steps and through the door, that in itself is a symbolic act, for it represents the turning aside from a life without God to a life of fellowship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. One of the first objects we see after entering the church is the baptismal font, which is placed near the door, symbolizing that it is the first step into the new life. As we pause inside the door, we see ahead of us a broad, open aisle leading all the way to the other end of the church, and culminating in an altar. As we look over the building and try to become familiar with the details, we find our eyes going back to it, and we can readily see that everything in it directs one's attention to the altar.

We start down the aisle—or perhaps we should say *up* the aisle, for at intervals there are ascending levels and steps leading upward until we reach the altar. We notice that the carpet is somewhat worn in places, and it reminds us of the many people who have walked this way; young couples to take their marriage vows before the altar, funeral processions, members of the church family, who go to the Altar to partake of the elements of Holy Communion and for services of dedication. We remember as we walk from the doorway of the church to the altar that it is symbolic of the journey through life from birth to death, and leading to the Presence of God. And the steps leading upward remind us that our journey through life should be an upward progress.

This church has three parts; the nave, where the congregation sits; the chancel, which is occupied by the minister and the choir; and the sanctuary, in which the altar is placed. Three steps lead from the nave to the chancel, one more from the chancel to the sanctuary, and three additional steps to the altar. This makes seven steps in all, and seven is considered the perfect number and symbolizes the transition from this life to the heavenly life. The three steps leading to the altar represent the Trinity and indicate that it is only through faith in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost that we have access to the sacred meal which we call the Lord's Supper.

The different parts of the church have meaning, too. The nave represents the Church Militant, or the Church in this world; the chancel, the Church Expectant, or those who have passed into the life beyond; and the Sanctuary, the Church Triumphant, or the Church at the end of the age when Our Lord shall reign forever.

As we reach the sanctuary, we find a kneeling rail separating the chancel and the sanctuary, but with the center left open, for nothing is ever placed in the way of our access to the Presence of God, which is symbolized by the Altar. We learn that the end of the church where the altar is placed is always designated as the "east" end, regardless of the actual direction. This has an interesting bit of symbolism behind it, which had its origin in ancient sun-worship. When the Sun-worshiping Gentiles were converted to Christianity, it was easy for them to comprehend the thought of Our Lord as the "Sun of Righteousness" and they continued to worship with their faces toward the rising sun, but with an entirely new meaning to the act, and with an entirely new Sun!

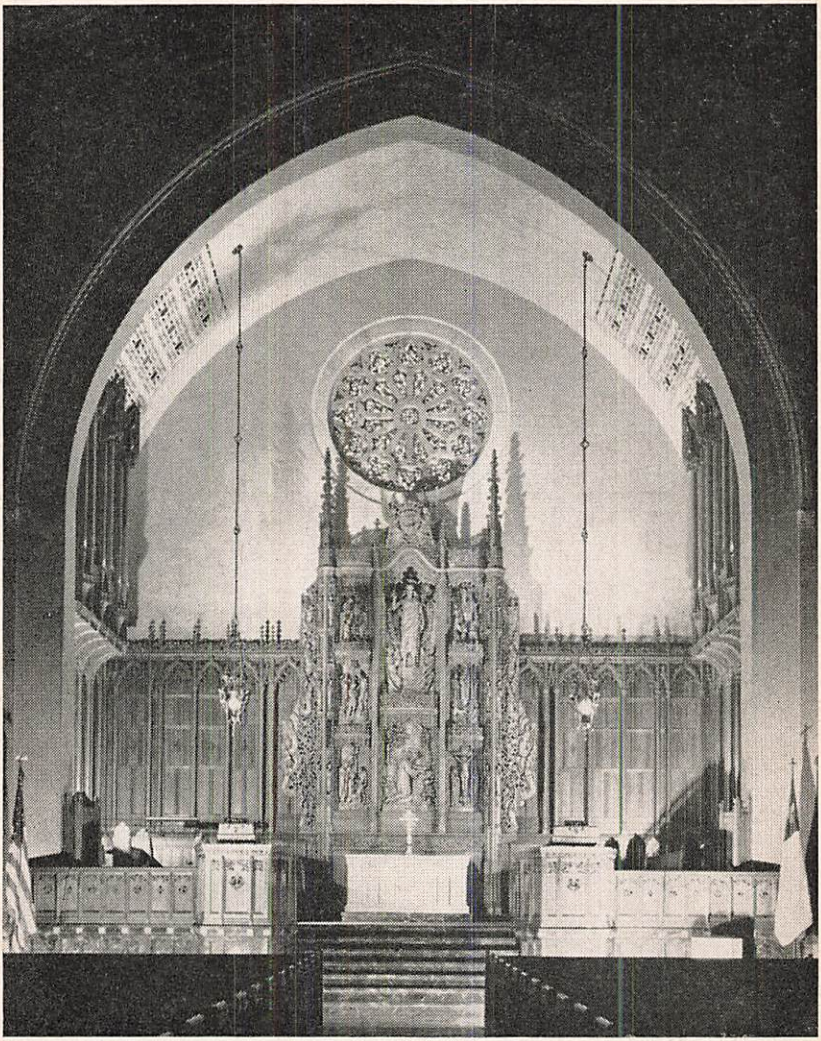
We learn that the altar symbolizes the Throne of God, and also serves as the Lord's Table. Its position indicates that God is the center of all our worship, and the entire service of worship is directed toward Him. The scripture reading, sermon, prayers,

offering and music are the congregation's method of offering their best to the Highest they know.

All the chancel furnishings are placed so as to help direct the attention of the worshippers toward God. The lectern is on one side of the chancel and the pulpit on the other, at the outer edge. The lectern, with the Bible resting on it, is for the reading of the Word, and the pulpit is for the preaching of the Word. The organ and the choir are also on the sides; half of the choir stalls on one side and half on the other. This is for convenience in antiphonal singing. The choir does not face the congregation because their purpose is not to give a concert or to entertain, but to take part in the worship.

As we bring our visit to a close, we begin to realize that our appreciation of any church will be much greater as we learn to "read" the symbolism that has been built into it.

Since our Methodist churches vary in form, all these symbolic features may not be found in Methodist churches built on liturgical lines. But the church *will* be altar-centered, and the whole plan and arrangement will be to direct the attention of the worshippers to the altar, and to the One to whom the entire service is our offering of penitence, praise, thanksgiving, witness and instruction, and self-dedication.



Reredos and Chancel of First Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois.

Chapter III

The Sanctuary

Then will I go unto the altar of my God; unto God my exceeding joy!—Psalm 43:4

THE SANCTUARY is that part of the chancel where the altar is placed, and is often separated from the rest of the chancel by a kneeling rail. It has its archetype in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple.

Webster defines an altar as "An elevated place where sacrifices are made to a deity; a table for the celebration of the Eucharist." (Holy Communion.) Thus we define the altar, but who can explain the impulse in the human heart that leads men to build altars? It is as old as the human race. Whenever men have recognized the Presence of God, the wonder and awe in their hearts, and the desire for communion with God, have led them to set aside a certain spot where they might seek Him, and to put something precious thereon as an offering.

Always at the center of worship there has been an altar. The material form has varied greatly and undergone many changes through the centuries. At first it was a circular space on the ground with a stone (on end) to mark it, or perhaps an erection of sun-dried bricks. Later there were altars made of limestone and alabaster, followed by huge elaborate altars overlaid with gold which were in the Temple. During the days of persecution, the tombs of the catacombs, out of necessity, became the altars of the early Christians. *"In every place where Yawweh records his name" altars were built.* Exodus 20:24

And so we build altars in our churches today. The form is different, and much of the purpose and use of the altar has

changed, but there is a certain spiritual significance that remains the same. It is still the outward expression of an inner consciousness of God's Presence, and our effort to provide a symbol which will say, "Surely the Lord is in this place . . . this is none other than the House of God."

For the first two hundred and fifty years, the primitive church did not build temples and altars and they were sometimes criticised for not doing so. The early Christian writer, Origen, answered this criticism by saying, "The altars are in the heart of every Christian." But they did worship at altars, although such a decided change had taken place after the resurrection that the altar would not have been recognized as such by any but themselves. Their altar became a simple table around which they partook of a meal so sacred in meaning that for a long time it was a secret rite to which no one was admitted but persons who had been baptized into the Christian faith.

The altar was no longer a place on which to offer sacrifices for sin, but a place at which to give thanks for "the one oblation once offered . . . a full, perfect and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." The early Christians brought their gifts to the altar in the form of bread and wine and ate together the "Lord's Supper," and so the altar came to be known as the Holy Table or the Lord's Table.

Today, our Christian altar marks a place set apart and dedicated to the worship of God; it symbolizes the Presence of God, and is a perpetual reminder of His love as revealed by Our Lord's sacrifice on Calvary. It also reminds us of the resurrection, and of Our Lord's continued Presence with us at all times, and especially so, as we enter into fellowship with Him and with each other as we partake of the sacred elements of Holy Communion.

So we can readily see why the altar is regarded with reverence by Christians everywhere; not as an object in itself, but because of the great symbolic meaning behind it. Like our stars and

stripes; the flag may be a very inexpensive piece of cloth, but because it is the symbol of our country, every American loves the flag and treats it with respect. And our government does not look with lenience toward any act of disrespect toward the flag!

The first consideration of the Altar Guild is the furnishing and care of the sanctuary and altar. The altar should be chosen with care, and should be large enough for the building it occupies. Often churches make the mistake of buying an altar that is too small, and when viewed from the rear of the church, it looks dwarfed. The dimensions of an altar are always 39 in. high, 24 in. wide and at least 5 ft. long. Whether it is plain and simple, or elaborate and richly carved, the altar should have dignity and beauty befitting its sacred use. It may be either a table-type or an "altar-type" altar, but it should occupy the central place in the church, and should be in plain sight of the congregation.

There was a time after the reformation when movable tables were substituted for altars and at the administration of the Lord's Supper, the Table was moved down in the midst of the congregation, and was set in the opposite direction from that of our altars today. Later, the altar was placed against the "east" wall, and was never moved from that position. (Some churches today are building "free" altars which set out from the wall with the minister officiating behind it.) Against the wall behind the altar hangs either an ornamental screen called the reredos, or a curtain made from a rich ecclesiastical cloth designed for that purpose, and called a dossal, or dorsal. If such a hanging is used, it may hang plain or in folds from a wrought iron fixture or rod.

The top of the altar is called the mensa. Some altars have a table-like shelf rising above them at the back next to the wall, which is called a re-table, or gradine. If there is a gradine, all the altar ornaments, such as the cross and candles are placed on

it, and only the elements for Holy Communion and the book of ritual are put on the mensa. Sometimes there is an even higher projection in the center of the re-table which is called the "throne", and the altar cross is placed there.

The cross is the most significant symbol of our faith, and is the central object on the altar. If it is not used on the altar, it may hang above the altar, against the reredos, or dossal. In that case, only the two candles,—one on each side of the cross,—and the vases of flowers and book of ritual are used regularly on the altar. For festival occasions, extra candles may be used. If more candles are desired, there should be six (6) candles in candelabra or *single* candlesticks. These are called "office lights" and are lighted for any service. The only candles prescribed for *regular* use on the altar are the ones that always burn during the Holy Communion, and in most Protestant churches are lighted for all services. They symbolize the two natures of Our Lord, the human and the divine, and when lighted, they say, "I am the light of the world."

A word should be said here about the manner of lighting the candles on the altar. The impressiveness of a service may be spoiled if this is done in a careless manner. If the janitor or an usher strolls down the aisle at the last minute and strikes a match, or uses a cigarette lighter, it certainly doesn't encourage a spirit of worship. How much better to have a boy trained to light and extinguish the candles as part of the service. He should be suitably vested and should use a candle lighter, lighting the candles just before the service begins and extinguishing them after the benediction. He is called an acolyte. It is customary for the acolyte to light the candle on the epistle side (see glossary) first, then that on the gospel side (see glossary). In extinguishing the candles, the gospel light is extinguished first. The candles should never be higher than the arms of the cross.

The correctly dressed altar is covered with linen or silk, and may have an altar cloth across the front in seasonal color, and hanging to a depth of from 6 to 9 inches. It is called a super-

frontal. The altar vestments are described in detail in the chapter on "Paraments."

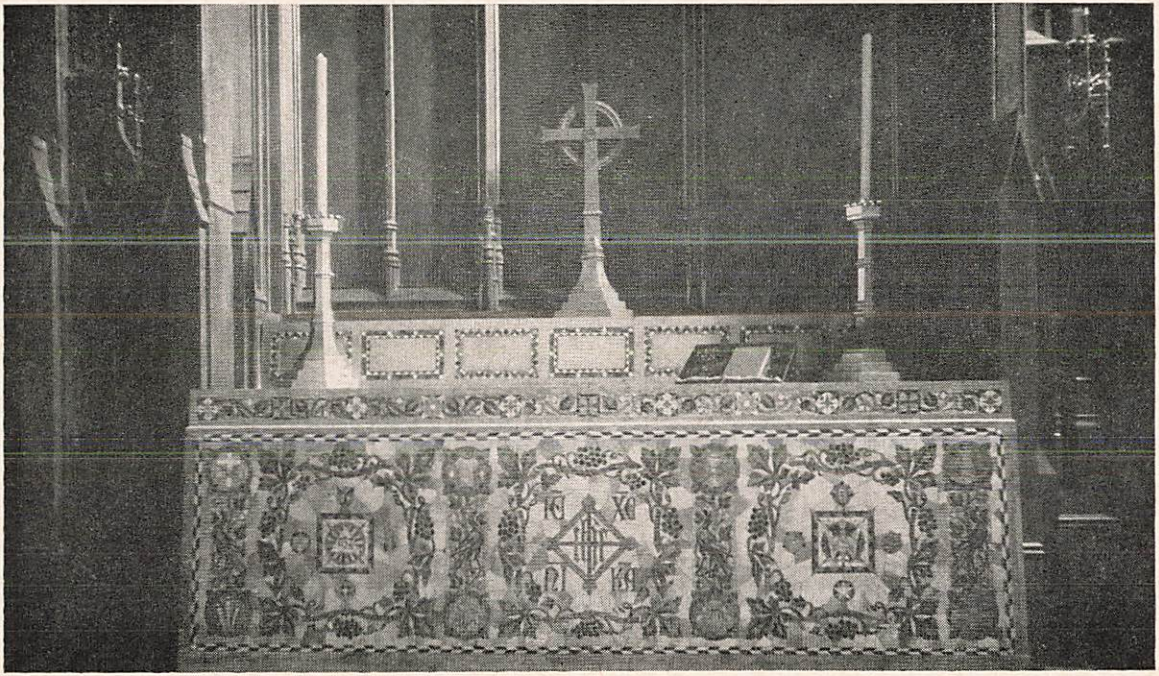
Linen has always been the traditional covering for the altar. Many Methodist churches follow the rule of liturgical churches and do not permit any kind of covering to be used on the altar except linen. Others use a silk scarf in color when there is no service of Holy Communion. The Discipline says that for that service, the altar must be covered with "Fair Linen." The fair linen is made to cover the top of the altar, with a drop at the ends of at least eighteen inches, or it may drop to within a few inches from the floor.

Have you ever wondered why it is called "Fair linen"? The word "fair" is used a number of times in the Bible, in interesting ways.—"Behold, I will lay thy stones with *fair* colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires." Isaiah 54:11. And in Ezekiel 16:17—"Thou hast taken thy *fair* jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee." In another chapter, "a cedar of Lebanon, with *fair* branches," is mentioned, and in Zechariah 3:5 we read, "And I said, let them set a *fair* mitre on his head."

So the word "fair" seems to be a choice Biblical term, used to designate a special quality. And when the Church prescribed fair linen for use during Holy Communion, it must have had in mind, not only the finest quality of plain white linen, but linen that has been prepared and made beautiful for a special purpose.

All altar linens and hangings should be well-made, for nothing is more depressing than to go into a church and find an altar that looks neglected and unloved. We need to catch some of the spirit of the Psalmist who said, "For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. . . . Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary." (Ps. 96:4 and 6)

Everything used in the Sanctuary should be of the best quality that we can provide. Anything that speaks of falseness or pretense should be avoided, such as electric candles, or artificial flowers. Nothing gaudy or cheaply ornate should be used.



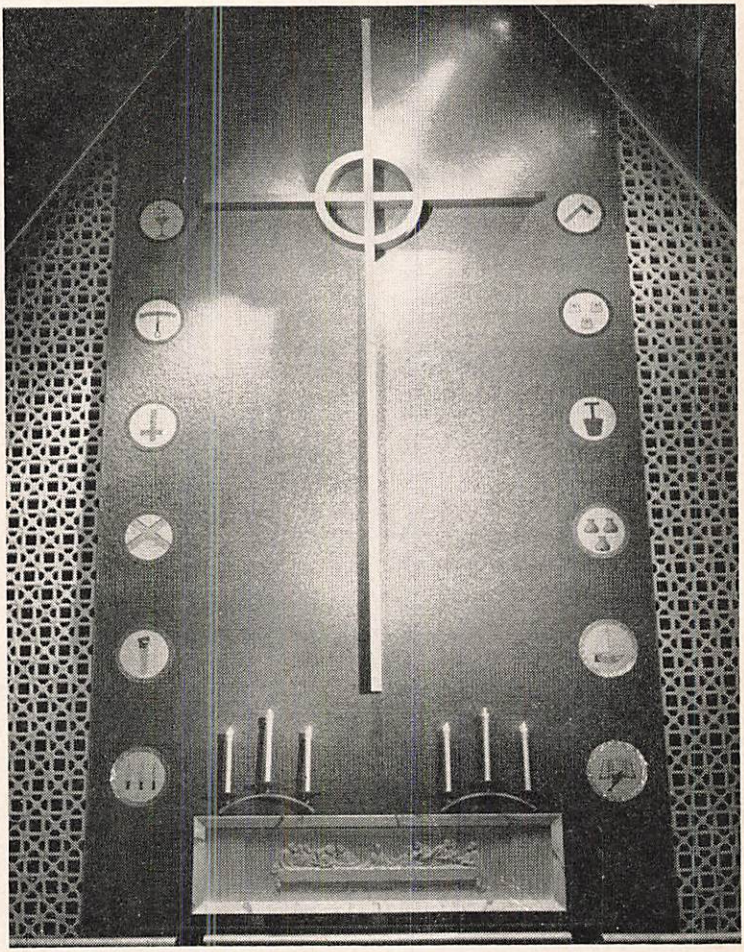
The Altar of Trinity Methodist Church, Springfield, Massachusetts. (The cross and candlesticks were made to order for this church by the Birmingham Art Guild, England.)

Avoid cheap factory-made candlesticks and crosses that are made to "look like what they are not." A plain, hand-carved cross of wood may be very good; a cross made of wood and covered with gilt paint to resemble a brass cross is bad! And it is not always the most expensive articles that are the most suitable. Often the value of an article can not be valued by the cost in dollars and cents, but by the quality of workmanship and material. It is better to use a cheaper material and have it genuine than to use an imitation of a more expensive material.

The church should express to all who come within its doors the qualities of simplicity, truth, sincerity, beauty, purity and integrity. This principle should govern us in the furnishing and care of the sanctuary.

Methodism has not laid down any hard and fast rules for the furnishing and care of the sanctuary. Indeed, there is a real danger that one may become too rigid about rules and too "fussy" about details, and thus make the externals of worship an end in themselves rather than the means to an end. All the furnishings of the church should be "aids" to worship;—valuable and important as such, but not indispensable, for it is possible to worship God anywhere—and even without a building.

But while there are no specific rules which we must follow, there are certain principles which should govern us in all our church care. One is, that when we make an offering to God of any material thing, it should be the best that we are capable of giving. Another, that we express outwardly, by our use of material things, what we are inwardly. Another important thing to remember is that we learn through the eye as well as through the ear, and that sometimes the one cancels out the other. For instance, how can we sing effectively, "And let our *ordered* lives confess the beauty of Thy peace", when all around us is disorder? Or, how can we say with sincerity, "The Lord is in His Holy Temple; Let all the earth keep silence before Him", when we have made no attempt to prepare even a physical setting that will be worthy of His Presence?



Christ Methodist Church, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Chapter IV

Symbolism

THERE IS a language of symbols just as there is a language of words. It is as old as time, and as universal as the human race. Each one of us uses this language in many ways every day of our lives, but like any other language, its usefulness increases as we learn more about it.

What is a symbol? It is the visible form of an abstract idea. It may be an eye-symbol or an act-symbol, but by association it calls to mind some idea or quality in something other than itself. It differs from an image or portrait in that it does not resemble the thing it represents, but merely suggests it.

It is doubtful if there is any way to express ideas *except* through symbols. Words are symbols, and words have different meanings to different people, depending on their background and experience and the idea with which they associate it. Even the world itself is a symbol of God's creative thought and love.

In the business world many symbols are used by manufacturers to designate their products. They may be "catchy" phrases made up of words, or they may be pictured forms which call to mind a product. Whenever we write a check, we are using a symbol, for the check is not actually the money, but just a sign that the money is available. And think of all the symbolic acts of friendship,—the handshake, the warm word of greeting, the smile.

Religion and symbolism are so interwoven that they are inseparable. The Bible is full of symbolic language, and visual symbols are built into every Christian church, many of them having come down to us from long ago. To those who understand their meaning, they are a source of inspiration, education and devotion. To those who do not understand their purpose,

they may be mistaken for an end instead of the means to an end, and become stumbling blocks. They are not objects to worship or reverence in themselves,—or even to spend too much time merely admiring!—but their purpose is to lead the mind beyond themselves to God.

The Christian church not only uses visual symbols, but act-symbols as well, such as kneeling or rising or bowing the head. And there is much that is symbolic in the Sacramental services of the church.

The divinely given symbols of our Lord are illustrations that he used again and again in his teaching. Take the parables, for instance, and the extensive use of illustrations that he used when referring to himself. "I am the Light of the World".—"I am the Bread of Life". "I am the Good Shepherd." "The Bright and Morning Star."

In the early days of the Christian church when many people could not read, the doctrinal teaching of the church was done by means of symbols. And during the time of persecution, they provided a secret method by which Christians could identify one another and communicate with one another.

Some of the oldest Christian symbols were born out of fear and necessity. The early Christians knew it was neither wise nor safe to worship publicly;—so they worshiped in the confines of their homes. When the homes were no longer suitable because of the increasing numbers and for safety measures, they went into the hills and took refuge in caves and catacombs. Here they conducted their worship services. Today, on the walls and ceilings of these places are found symbols of their faith, laboriously chiseled on hard granite. Sometimes a pagan symbol on one side, a Christian symbol on the other, silently witnessing to man's faith in God.

The most widely used and best known symbol of our Christian faith is the cross. It speaks of the sacrificial love of God, and the redemption of the world through the death and resurrection

of our Lord. The cross is used by individuals, in homes, in various places and ways about church buildings, and on church altars. These early Christians could not erect a cross above their place of worship for fear it might be seen by the enemy of Christianity. So they crossed themselves on the forehead or breast, a secret sign which had meaning only to the Christian.

One of the oldest symbols used by the early church was the fish. The Greek word for fish is *ichthus,* and it forms the initial letters of the Greek words, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." This symbol is not too commonly used today, but it is a solemn reminder of the days long past when this sign was the only guide for Christians to find one another, and their places of worship.

Another early symbol was the ship, representing the church as the ark of safety which carried the faithful over the sea of life.

Some other symbols that represent our Lord are:—The Good Shepherd, the Sun of Righteousness, the lighted candle, the Agnus Dei, or the Lamb and the Book of the Seven Seals, and the kingly crown which signifies the "King of Kings."

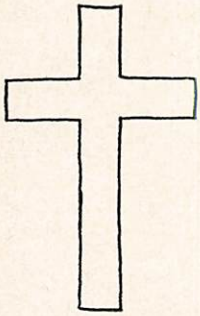
There are four evangelical symbols taken from the books of Ezekiel and Revelation. The winged man is St. Matthew, the winged lion is St. Mark, the winged ox is St. Luke and the winged eagle is St. John. Others may be recognized by symbols also;—St. Andrew by the cross, St. Peter by the keys, St. Paul by the sword and St. Edward by the cup and dagger. Other symbols include the Peacock, a symbol of immortality, the Phoenix, of resurrection, the Dragon or Serpent, Satan. And the stag represents a soul thirsting for baptism. These and many other symbols hold for us a deep spiritual meaning and bring to our remembrance the shame and suffering—even death—which the early Christians endured for the sake of Christ.

The various symbols used on the altar hangings have seasonal significance. An example of this found in the use of the triangle or three interlocking circles which, being a symbol of the Trinity, is used on the green hangings. Other examples are the use of the

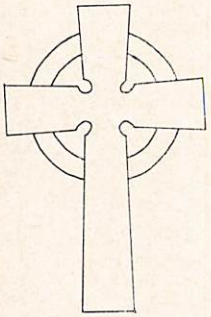
cross on the purple hanging, the dove or the lamb on the red, and the lily, which is a symbol of the resurrection, on the white.

The same is true of our great hymns. For example—it would be fitting to use "Holy Spirit, Truth Divine" in the worship service on Whitsunday or Pentecost.

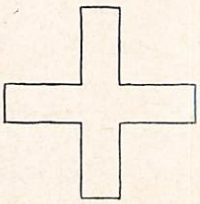
And what is more appropriate for Advent than "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" or for Trinity Sunday, "Holy, Holy, Holy"?



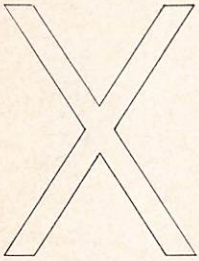
Latin Cross—There are more than fifty forms of crosses, the best known form being the *Latin Cross,* which was the one used on Calvary. It is the cross that is used on the church altar, and it often stands on three steps which are also symbolic, representing faith, hope and love.



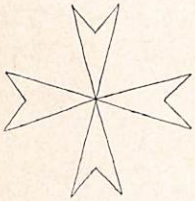
The Celtic Cross—Sometimes called the Cross of Iona or Irish Cross. This type of cross is often seen on covers of hymnals, church bulletins, books and tracts. The circle around the middle part of the cross symbolizes eternity.



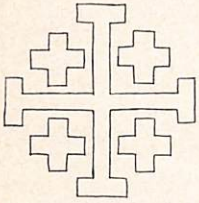
The Greek Cross—This cross is square in design, with four arms of equal length.



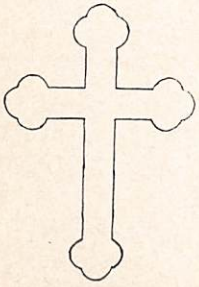
St. Andrew's Cross—This cross is a leaning cross, and is so called because St. Andrew was supposed to have died on such a Cross.



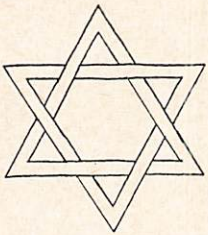
Maltese Cross—This cross is a variation of the Greek cross, in which each arm broadens out from the center and ends in twin points. Symbolizes regeneration of man, also the eight beatitudes.



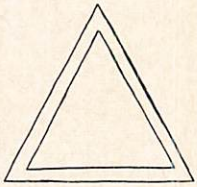
The Jerusalem Cross—This cross is sometimes used as the symbol of missionary work as it spread from Jerusalem to the four corners of the earth.



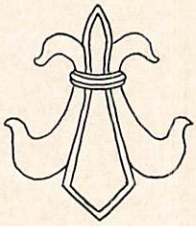
The Budded Cross:. A beautiful cross often used on top of the Christian flag, and may be of either Latin or Greek type, with trefoil ends. Widely used for processional crosses.



Double Triangle—The Double Triangle signifies the Trinity, and also the work of creation by the Triune God, with all three persons of the Godhead concurring.



Triangle—Another symbol of the Holy Trinity.



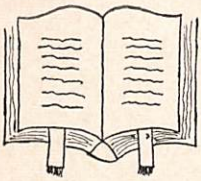
Fleur-De-lis—Symbol of the Holy Trinity. Sometimes used to symbolize the Annunciation of Our Lord.

The Wheat—Wheat heads symbolize the Bread of Life.

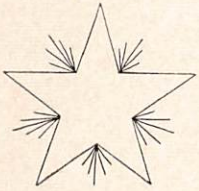
The Palm Leaf—Victory, heavenly reward.

The Bursting Pomegranate—Symbol of the resurrection. Symbolizing the power that caused Our Lord to burst forth from the tomb.

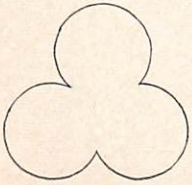
Alpha and Omega—Often used to represent Our Lord and is formed by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord. . . ." Rev. 1:8.



The Open Bible—Symbolizes the Word of God.



The Five Pointed Star—The Star of Bethlehem, the great symbol of the Epiphany. The Star of Jacob. Matt. 2:2.



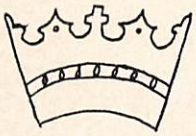
The Trefoil—Symbol of the Holy Trinity.

The Hand of God—A symbol of God the Father. "Humble yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:" I Peter 5:6.

The Descending Dove—This symbol goes back to the very beginning of the church. It represents the Holy Spirit, and has its origin in the event of our Lord's baptism, when the Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove.

The Cup—The Cup and the Cross, symbolize the suffering of Our Lord. ". . . . O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

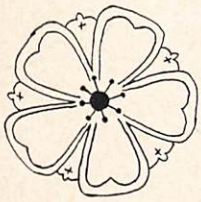
Crown of Thorns and Nails—Symbol of Our Lord's Passion.



Crown—The Crown is a symbol of Victory. It is also used with the cross to signify that he who bears the cross in this life will wear the crown in the life to come.

Cross and Crown—These symbols, used together, symbolize the reward of the faithful in the life after death. ". . . and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10.

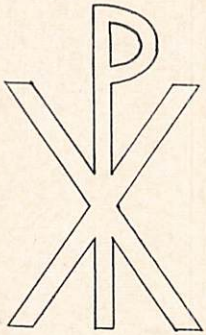
Fish—In the days of the persecution, Christians often identified one another by the drawing of a *fish*. The initial letters of the Greek words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour", make the word *fish* in the Greek language, and thus it became a secret sign.



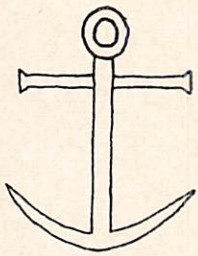
The Rose—Symbol of the Nativity of Our Lord.

I H S—This is perhaps the most widely used monogram to signify Our Lord. It is composed of the first three letters of the name *Jesus* in Greek.

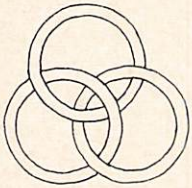
Butterfly—A symbol of the resurrection.



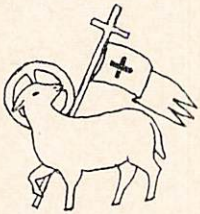
Chi and Rho—This symbol forms the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ. They are like X and P in the English language, and when used on ecclesiastical cloth and as embroidered symbols, they are usually superimposed, one on the other.



The Anchor symbolizes hope. Used by the early Christians, possibly because the transverse bar of the Anchor gives the appearance of a cross. (Heb. 6:19)



The three intertwined circles symbolize the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.



The Lamb of God: The lamb carrying the banner of victory represents Christ triumphant over death and the grave, bearing the symbol of salvation. (John 1:29, 36.)

Initial letters for the Latin inscription on the cross; Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews". Symbol for Jesus. (John 19:19)

THE LITURGICAL COLORS

WHITE: The color of perfection, of perfect glory, beauty, holiness and joy is scheduled for use on the joy days, the festivals of the Godhead—the great days of the year.

RED: The symbol of the Holy Spirit and the color of fire, blood and fervor is used on the days which mark the great events in the life of Christ and for the commemoration of those who have made the good confession, e. g. apostles and martyrs.

GREEN: The color of abiding life, of peace, nourishment, rest and constancy finds its use in the longer teaching seasons. Especially during Kingdomtide.

VIOLET: The color of royal mourning is used during periods of preparation and penitence.

BLACK: The symbol of the depths of woe, sorrow, utter darkness, finds but two (2) uses in the Church Year—Good Friday and when the church calls to humiliation and prayer.

Where only one color is used in a church, usually it is *Red*—Sometimes *Blue* is used in small chapels as a year 'round color signifying truth and eternity.

Advent tells us Christ is near;
Christmas tells us Christ is here.
In Epiphany we trace
All the glory of his grace.

Then three Sundays will prepare
For the time of fast and prayer,
That, with hearts made penitent,
We may keep a faithful Lent.

Holy Week and Easter then
Tell who died and rose again:
O that happy Easter Day!
"Christ is risen indeed," we say.

Yes, and Christ ascended, too,
To prepare a place for you;
So we give him special praise
After those great forty days.

Then He sent the Holy Ghost
On the day of Pentecost,
With us ever to abide;
Well may we keep Whitsuntide.

Last of all we humbly sing
Glory to our God and King.
Glory to the one in three,
On the Feast of Trinity.

—KATHERINE HANKEY, 1888 (Hymnal)

Chapter V

The Church Year

DID YOU EVER try to imagine life without a calendar? Before the adoption of our present calendar, people measured time by changes in nature such as from "sunrise" to "sunset" or so many "moons". They learned that the universe operates according to fixed and unchanging laws, built into the very nature of the universe and that the rhythm and sequence of nature is so dependable that the position and visibility of planets and stars can be predicted to the very minute.

And so when our calendar came into use, it was based on God's Calendar, and the time sequence under which the natural world operates. When we learn God's plan in the natural world, which is a plan of recurring seasons in orderly sequence, we may be sure the same plan is effective in the spiritual realm. Therefore, it is logical and right that the Church should have a balanced and orderly plan for teaching and experiencing the great truths about God and the doctrines of the faith. If the teaching of the Church is given without such a framework, it becomes lop-sided and disconnected as each leader puts the emphasis on the parts that are more palatable to him and neglects the others.

The plan of the Christian Year and the Church Calendar meets this need for an orderly outline for Christian teaching and worship. It is part of our Christian heritage, having grown out of centuries of experience and worship. Its roots are found in Old Testament worship, as God's people commemorated his dealings with Israel by regular observance of special days and seasons. A partial following of the Christian Year is found in practically all denominations in the observance of Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and other special days. There is a growing

tendency toward a recognition of the entire calendar of the church year.

One of the first things we learn in our Methodist teaching is that salvation is not an attainment; it is a free gift from God. It is by His grace that we receive the gift of spiritual life and are born into His family. But man has a part in the plan of salvation, and it is to respond to God's gift by making use of all that He has provided for our growth;—worship, study, prayer, fellowship in His Church, and service to those about us. It is a mistake to think that balanced spiritual development can result from a spasmodic, unbalanced teaching program, where over emphasis is given to some of the great Christian doctrines and others are neglected.

The church calendar and the plan of the Christian Year, with its seasonal hymns, scripture readings, colors and symbols, provide a framework through which the teachings of the church can be given in an orderly and rhythmical manner, instead of being left to individual impulse. During the year, every part of the Christian faith is given due emphasis. Every great event in the life of our Lord is brought to our remembrance, and we experience anew his birth, his ministry and teachings, his death, resurrection and ascension. And during the seasons of Whitsuntide, and Kingdomtide the gospel truths are presented from various angles for our spiritual nourishment and growth.

One loss which we suffer in letting the less widely recognized days of the Church calendar go by without the same attention which we give to Christmas and Easter is the opportunity to sing the great hymns which belong to these days. The Methodist Hymnal in its topical index groups hymns according to special days or seasons or doctrinal truths.

We know how the Christmas carols would be missed at that season of the year, and who has not felt a surge of joy on Easter morning at the strains of "Christ the Lord is Risen Today, Alleluia!"

Wouldn't it be fine if we could become as familiar with the hymns for Pentecost, Epiphany, Ascension Day, and Trinity, as we are with the Christmas and Easter hymns?

We can illustrate how much more effective a hymn is when sung at a suitable time by trying to imagine a Christmas carol or Easter hymn being used at a Good Friday service! With how much more meaning we can sing the joyful Easter "Alleluias" *after* we have sung, on Good Friday, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"!

There may be objection on the part of some to following the Church Calendar because they feel to do so would hinder the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This is not true, because there is wide latitude in the freedom and manner in presenting the Christian Year. The plan of the Church Calendar insures the witness of the *whole* gospel. Each person of the Trinity is honored and His office work is emphasized. Every event in the life of Our Lord is relived in such a way that it becomes not only an event in history, but a present reality. True, we are disciplined to presenting truths at designated times, but there is a balance of discipline and freedom which gives variety and freshness to each recurring season.

The plan of the Christian Year has proven such an instrument of spiritual growth, that surely it must have come about through divine guidance.

The Church Year begins with the Advent Season, beginning with the Sunday nearest November 30th and lasting until Christmas Eve. It is the season of preparation for the advent of the Redeemer of mankind, or the birth of Christ. It is also the season looking forward to the second advent, or the second coming of Christ, according to His promise.

When we think of the greatest miracle and mystery of the ages, the Incarnation . . . the Word becoming Flesh . . . the Creator and Ruler of the universe coming into a sinful world as man, to redeem the world, it is plain to see that we need a

time of penitence and preparation to be ready to receive Him. That is the purpose of Advent, as the Church calls attention to the prophecies concerning the Messiah and leads her members to experience the joy of the fulfillment of those prophecies.

Advent tells us Christ is near,
Christmas tells us—Christ is here!

The whole world loves Christmas! This season is universally observed by the Christian Church, as the birthday of Christ Jesus is celebrated. It is a joyous season, and this joy is reflected in the festive candles, evergreens and flowers, and the music of the ancient carols and hymns of Christmas.

Services of the church are rich with meaning as the old yet ever new story of the Incarnation is presented through music, drama, and the Eucharistic services. The Christmas season covers the period from Christmas Eve to the Eve of Epiphany (Jan. 5) and the inevitable color of the season is white.

Epiphany Day is January 6th and the season lasts until the beginning of Lent. Epiphany marks the coming of the wise men, and it is the season of the Church year that especially emphasizes Missionary work. When the wise men found Christ, it was the first manifestation of our Lord to the Gentiles. And as the wise men returned to their own countries and witnessed to the Messiah whom they had found, the Gentiles began to accept Christ as their Saviour, and so began the missionary endeavor.

The Lenten Season begins with Ash Wednesday, a special day of prayer, and continues for forty days, not counting the Sundays in this period.

Sunday is always a "feast" day in the life of the church, and Lent is a penitential season. It is observed in commemoration of the forty days' fast of our Lord. It is a season of penitence as we remember the suffering of Christ and the price of our redemption. It is the revival season of the church, as Christians seek through fasting and self denial, and through prayer and service to reach

a higher plane of spiritual living and to know the fellowship of Christ's suffering.

Within the Lenten Season, the final week which is called Holy Week merits special attention, and several days of this week are observed throughout Christendom.

The Sunday before Easter, which is called Palm Sunday, is the day the Church remembers Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, when children waved palm branches and crowds sang, "Hozanna to the King."

The Thursday before Easter commemorates the institution of the Lord's Supper and also the washing of the feet of the disciples by their Master and Lord. Many churches still have a foot-washing ceremony as a lesson in humility and service. Christian churches throughout the world observe the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday, and WHITE is used for this service, because even in the shadow of the cross, this is a Eucharistic service or a service of thanksgiving and joy, because it is both a commandment given us by our Lord to "Do this," and it is also a means of witnessing to our faith in the atonement and a means whereby we experience the same fellowship with the living Lord as was experienced at the table on that last Thursday.

On Good Friday, the day of the crucifixion, the churches are bare of flowers, candles or hangings, unless BLACK is used. Most churches are open for service between twelve o'clock and three o'clock, the hours when the Son of God hung on the cross. It is a time of mourning for the Church, as the cross reveals both the depth of man's sin and the full measure of God's love and the terrible price that was paid for man's redemption.

The Lenten season closes officially at noon on Saturday to make way for Easter Even. This is traditionally a time for baptisms. The rite of baptism has an added symbolic meaning at this time as we remember the words of St. Paul, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus

were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead . . . we too might walk in newness of life". *On this day our Lord's body rested in the tomb.

What a change from the bleak darkness of Good Friday to the bright dawning of Easter morning! Easter is the most joyous day in the Church Calendar, as the whole Church joins in the triumphant hymns of the resurrection, "Christ the Lord is Risen Today, Alleluia!"

On Easter, as on Christmas, the church is made festive and beautiful with Easter lilies and other flowers, and candles, expressing the joy of the resurrection. The color of all paraments is white.

The Easter season covers a period of forty days, from Easter Even to Ascension Day. These are known as the "Great Forty Days", during which Our Lord continued his earthly ministry, giving final instructions to his disciples concerning things that pertained to the Kingdom of God.

Ascension Day is one of the four great festivals of the church, ranking with Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday. It commemorates the ascension of our risen Lord to the Heavenly realm, where he is crowned with honor and glory, and acknowledged "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS". Rev. 19:16

Ascension Day, being the fortieth day after Easter, always falls on Thursday. The season of Ascensiontide lasts ten days, corresponding to the time during which the disciples tarried in Jerusalem waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Christian Year reaches a crescendo with the observance of Ascension Day. It marks the end of Christ's earthly ministry through the agency of his human body and his triumphant return to his Heavenly realm. The remainder of the Christian Year presents him in his spiritual ministry through his mystical body, the church.

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* Revised Version. Romans 6:3-4

Chapter II

The House of the Lord

How lovely is thy Dwelling Place, Oh Lord of Hosts!
Psalm 84:1

METHODISM embraces a two-fold tradition of worship, the free and the liturgical, each making its own rich contribution to the life of the church. We find these two aspects of worship reflected in two types of church architecture. There are many variations between the extremes of these two types, and some churches combine features of both. There is one characteristic which most houses of worship have in common, however. That is the division of the church into two parts; the nave, where the congregation sits, and the chancel, where the altar is placed and which is occupied by the clergy and the choir.

The meaning of the word nave is "ship". It reminds us of the fact that the very earliest symbolism associated with the church is that of the ship. It probably goes back to the thought of the ark, and the church in comparison being the "ark of safety", it was natural that the early church buildings were in the form

of a ship. Indeed, the word worship is a combination of the two words, "worth" and "ship" and implies that as the one who was chosen to be the Captain of the ship was "worthy of the ship", so the Creator of the universe is "worthy" to be our ruler, and to receive our praise and adoration. The act of worship is our acknowledgment of that fact.

All churches should look like churches, but they do not need to look alike. They should express certain basic, fundamental qualities but beyond that, there is freedom to differ in choice of material, to choose a design that meets the needs of a particular community, and to build a church that reflects the traditions of worship in the congregation, and "fits" into the physical setting.

It is not the purpose of this book to interpret church architecture, but to point out the symbolism of the different types of buildings. So no effort has been made to conform to strict architectural terms but to use the words that have become familiar to us through long usage. And it must be remembered that this book is confined to the part of the building where the worship services are held, and in referring to the church that part of it is meant.

Often the informal type of church is built in auditorium style, according to what is sometimes called the "Akron plan."

The era of the "Akron plan" building began in 1867, and is outmoded now, so far as new construction is concerned, but many congregations must of necessity worship in churches that were built during this period, so it needs consideration here.

In this type church the pulpit platform is set across the corner of a square room, and the pews arranged diagonally to face it. The pews, kneeling rail and pulpit platform all follow a curved, semi-circular pattern. Such a room gives a feeling of "nearness" to the speaker, and an atmosphere of informality. The pulpit is placed in the center front of the platform, and has the open Bible resting on it, symbolizing the preached Word as the central

Our Hymnal contains no greater hymns than those of Ascension Day. WHITE is the color used during Ascensiontide as the church rejoices in the triumphant crowning of her eternal King.

Ten days after the ascension, the promised Comforter, the Holy Spirit, came to the waiting disciples and with His coming came the power to witness to their faith in the resurrected Lord in such an effective manner that thousands accepted Christ, and the Church which had always existed as a plan in the mind of God became a visible reality on earth. And so we think of Pentecost as the birthday of the Church. It was called Whitsunday because it was the day when candidates were received for baptism and it was the custom that they should wear white garments. Whitsuntide lasts until the last Sunday in August. The season of Whitsuntide emphasizes the church, motivated by the Holy Spirit, as the instrument of God's will in this world.

Trinity Sunday, which is the Sunday following Pentecost, marks the beginning of the second half of the Christian Year. During the first half of the year, all the main aspects of our Lord's life have been portrayed, and a progressive revelation of God, incarnate in his Son, has been given to mankind. God has been made manifest as the Eternal Father and Creator, the loving Saviour and Friend, the suffering Servant, the resurrected Lord and the victorious and everlasting King of the universe. Finally, at Pentecost, he is revealed as an indwelling and abiding Spirit,—the Comforter or "Strengthener" of his followers.

In natural sequence, then, this revelation culminates in a day when the Holy Trinity is worshiped; when the three-fold nature of God is proclaimed,—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the three-in-one.

As the first half of the Christian Year deals with God's revelation to man, so the second half has to do with man's commitment, or his response to this revelation. This is the time for growth in Christian discipleship, and for presentation of the teachings of Christ and of the great doctrines of the Christian faith.

The final season of the Church Year is Kingdomtide, beginning on the last Sunday in August with the Festival of Christ the King, and continuing until Advent. This is the growing season of the Church; a time when the social gospel is preached and emphasis is given to the principles of the Kingdom of God on earth. A number of special days are observed in this period, including World Wide Communion on the first Sunday in October, and All Saint's Day on November 1st. The Church Year comes to a close on a note of thanksgiving with the observance of Thanksgiving Day.

And so the year ends, to begin again with Advent. Year after year the cycle is repeated as the Church experiences anew the historical events in Christ;—events which are not only points in history but revelations of eternal truth.

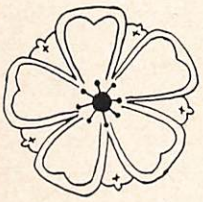
The Church Year is a great spiritual experience. Everything relating to Our Lord's earthly life has eternal significance. Every event was a vehicle for God's revelation of a truth which is eternal.

A faithful observance of the Christian Year results in spiritual growth, and in learning to know Christ, whom to know is eternal life.

The Church Year in Scripture and Song

ADVENT

This season begins on the Sunday nearest St. Andrew's Day, November 30th., and is the beginning of the ecclesiastical year.



Advent means a coming, a visitation, the coming of our Saviour's birth. This is the first advent, the second advent is yet to come. It is during this season that we make preparation for the Nativity. Since it is a time of preparation and penitence the color used is violet, the same as in Lent. This season contains four Sundays and ends Christmas Eve. Season of Expectancy.

COLLECT: Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through Him who livest and reignest with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. St. Matthew 3:2

Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Isaiah 40:3

HYMNS: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
O Come, O Come Immanuel
Hail to the Lord's Annointed

CHRISTMASTIDE

The Season of Christmas. Begins on Christmas Day December 25. Birthday of our Lord. Lasts through Epiphany Eve. (Dec.

25-Jan. 6) usually two Sundays. Since this is a joyous season, white is the color used.

COLLECT: Eternal Father, who by the birth of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ didst give thyself to mankind; grant that, being born in our hearts, he may save us from all our sins, and restore within us the image and likeness of our Creator, to whom be everlasting praise and glory, world without end. Amen.

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thine only Son Jesus Christ: grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so may we with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost. One God, world without end. Amen.

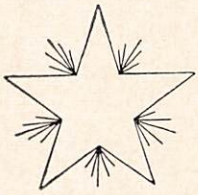
SCRIPTURE: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Rev. 21:3

HYMNS: Silent Night

O Little Town of Bethlehem
O Come All Ye Faithful
Hark the Herald Angels Sing

EPIPHANY



The season begins on January 6th, in commemoration of the manifestation of our Saviour's birth to the wise men of the East, and continues until Ash Wednesday. White is used for Epiphany Day and through one week. Green is used for the remainder of the season to signify the growing church and the spreading of the gospel. Season of the Evangel.

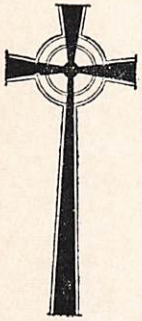
COLLECT: O God, who, by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; mercifully grant that we, who know Thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: The Gentiles shall come to thy light and Kings to the brightness of thy rising. Isaiah 60:3

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusaleum, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. Matthew 2:1-2

HYMNS: We Three Kings of the Orient Are
As with Gladness Men of Old
Joy to the World
From All the Dark Places

LENT



The revival season of the Church. A time of penitence and self-denial, and of intensive cultivation of the life of the spirit. Lasts forty days, corrseponding to the forty days' fast at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry. Commemorates his suffering and death on the cross. The seasonal color is violet or purple. The last two weeks of Lent are called Passiontide. The final week is also called Holy Week.

COLLECT: Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves; keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. Matthew 4:1-2

HYMNS: Just as I Am Without One Plea
O Jesus, Thou Art Standing Outside the Fast Closed Door
Thou My Everlasting Portion

HOLY WEEK:

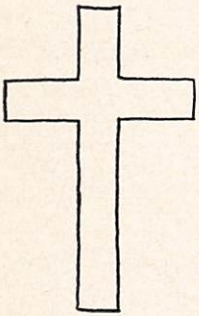
MAUNDY THURSDAY: A commandment. The oldest of the observances of the Christian Holy Week, commemorating the institution of the Lord's Supper or Eucharist.

COLLECT: Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, did institute the Sacrament of his Body and Blood; mercifully grant that we may thankfully receive the same in remembrance of him, who in the holy mysteries giveth us a pledge of life eternal; the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who now liveth and reigneth without end. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 1 Cor. 11:23-25

A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. John 13:34

HYMNS: Bread of the World in Mercy Broken
In Memory of the Saviour's Love
Jesus Spreads His Banner O'er Us



GOOD FRIDAY: The anniversary of the death of Christ, observed on the Friday before Easter. The altar is bare except for the cross, which is draped with a square of black chiffon. No hangings are used for this occasion on the altar, though black falls may be used on the lectern and pulpit.

COLLECT: Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, One God, world without end. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they called together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head. . . . And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. St. Mark 15:16-17-24

HYMNS: Beneath the Cross of Jesus
Behold the Saviour of Mankind
Alas and Did My Saviour Bleed
O Love Divine What Hast Thou Done
When I Behold the Wondrous Cross

The Lenten Season closes officially at noon on Saturday, in order to make way for Easter preparations. Easter Even is traditionally a day for baptisms.

EASTERTIDE

This season begins on Easter Sunday and lasts forty days. Color white.

COLLECT: Almighty God, who through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly beseech thee that as by special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, One God, world without end. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. Luke 24:1-9

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Col. 3:1

HYMNS: Christ the Lord Is Risen Today
Welcome Happy Morning
Come ye Faithful, Raise the Strain

ASCENTIONTIDE

Commemorates Christ's ascension at Mt. Olivet.

Ascension Day—Thursday, forty days after Easter. Season lasts ten days. Color, white.

COLLECT: Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended in the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, One God, world without end. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. Luke 24:50-51

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that, he through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. Acts 1:1-2

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. St. Luke 24:49

HYMNS: All Hail the Power of Jesus Name
Crown Him With Many Crowns
Look, Ye Saints, The Sight is Glorious
Rejoice, The Lord is King

WHITSUNTIDE

This season commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. Pentecost has a double meaning. It is the anniversary of our Lord's fulfilled promise of the bestowing of the Holy Spirit and it is also the birthday of the Christian Church. The season lasts until the last Sunday in August. Red for Pentecost.

COLLECT: O God, who at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; grant us by the same spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy Comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, One God, world without end. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:1-4

HYMNS: I Worship Thee O Holy Ghost
Breathe on Me Breath of God
The Church's One Foundation
Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

TRINITY SUNDAY: The second Sunday in Whitsuntide. Color is white.

COLLECT: O eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, grant that in the majesty of thy creation we may behold thy power that upholds us, in the face of Jesus Christ thy love that seeks and saves us, and in the new life within our soul thy Spirit kindling

within us; that so even to our littleness thine infinite wonder may be revealed, O blessed Triune God. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. John 1:18

Then said he to his disciples, The harvest is truly great, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest that he will send forth laborers into the harvest. Luke 10:2

HYMNS: Holy, Holy, Holy
Come, Thou Almighty King
We Lift Our Hearts to Thee
Ancient of Days, Who Sittest Throned in Glory
Thou, Whose Almighty Word

KINGDOMTIDE

The season of Kingdomtide begins on the last Sunday in August and continues until Advent. Seasonal color is green except for special days.

COLLECT: Almighty God, who hast given unto thy Son Jesus Christ a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: make us loyal followers of our living Lord, that we may always hear his word, obey his commands, and live in his Spirit; and hasten the day when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is the Lord; to thine eternal glory. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Amos 5:24

All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. Psalms 145:10

HYMNS: Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun
In Christ There is no East or West
Heralds of Christ, Who Bear the Kings Command
From All the Dark Places

ALL SAINTS DAY: Commemorates the martyrs, saints, and all who have died in the faith. (November 1st.)

COLLECT: Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ Our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which Thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 7th chapter
Matthew 5th chapter

HYMNS: For All the Saints who from their Labors Rest
Hark, Hark my Soul! Angelic Songs are Swelling

SPECIAL DAYS IN THE CHURCH CALENDAR

First Sunday in Advent—Sunday nearest St. Andrews Day which is November 30.

Christmas Day—December 25.

New Years Day—January 1.

Epiphany—January 6.

Ash Wednesday—First day of Lent.

Passion Sunday—Fifth Sunday in Lent.

Palm Sunday—Sixth Sunday in Lent and next before Easter.

Maundy Thursday—Thursday before Easter.

Good Friday—Day of Crucifiction. Friday before Easter.

Holy Saturday—Easter Even. Day before Easter.

Easter Day—Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal Equinox. Earliest possible date is March 22, latest, April 25.

Ascension Day—Forty days after Easter and therefore always on a Thursday.

Whitsunday or Pentecost—Ten days after the ascension.

Trinity Sunday—Sunday next after Whitsunday.

Independence Day—July 4.

World Wide Communion Day—First Sunday in October.

Thanksgiving Day—Last Thursday in November, or any day directed by civil authority.

All Saints Day—November 1st.

Days Commemorating Apostles

St. Andrew—November 30.

St. Thomas—December 21.

St. Stephen—December 26.

St. John—December 27.

Conversion of St. Paul—January 25.

St. Mark—April 25.

St. Phillip and St. James—May 1.

St. Barnabas—June 11.

St. Peter—June 29.

St. James—July 25.

The Transfiguration—August 6.

St. Bartholomew—August 24.

St. Matthew—September 21.

St. Luke—October 18.

St. Simon and St. Jude—October 28.

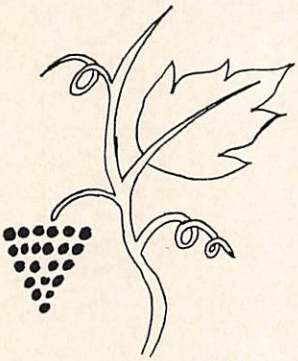
If special services are held on these days, *red* is used on the altar if the Saint who is being commemorated was martyred. In all other instances, *white* is the color used.

EASTER DATES

1962	April 22nd.	1976	April 18th.
1963	April 14th.	1977	April 10th.
1964	March 29th.	1978	March 26th.
1965	April 18th.	1979	April 15th.
1966	April 10th.	1980	April 6th.
1967	March 26th.	1981	April 19th.
1968	April 14th.	1982	April 11th.
1969	April 6th.	1983	April 3rd.
1970	March 29th.	1984	April 22nd.
1971	April 11th.	1985	April 7th.
1972	April 2nd.	1986	March 30th.
1973	April 22nd.	1987	April 19th.
1974	April 14th.	1988	April 3rd.
1975	March 30th.	1989	March 26th.

Reeves Memorial Methodist Church, Orlando, Florida.

Chapter VI



The Sacraments

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10:16

A SACRAMENT is the "outward and visible sign of an inner and spiritual grace". There is a relationship between a symbol and a sacrament in that both are visible illustrations of a Christian truth. But there is a *plus* quality in a sacrament in that it is a significant *deed,* in which temporal things are used in such a manner that they have the value of eternal things, and are the means by which spiritual reality is experienced.

The Methodist Church recognizes two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. They were ordained of Christ and are common to the whole Body of Christ's church.

> Since much of the work of the Altar Guild has to do with preparation for the Sacramental services of the church and caring for the vessels used, it is important that its members understand the true significance of the sacraments, and their relation to the total worship program of the church. Perhaps those of us who are Altar Guild members need to be reminded more frequently than others of the "inner and spiritual grace" because the very nature of our work tends to focus our attention on the "outward and visible signs".

It might be well to refresh our memories by referring to the Discipline of the Methodist Church. The sacraments are fully defined in "The Articles of Religion". Baptism is the initial rite in church membership and we quote from the Discipline: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptised, but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. . . ."

Baptism, if rightly received, is a means of grace, whereby we are grafted onto the Church and made members of the mystical Body of Christ.

In the definitions concerning the Sacraments, found in the Articles of Religion, two words stand out,—the words "not only". A sacrament is *not only* the simple, symbolic act that is visible to us, but there is also another side to it, which is an action on God's part in response to simple obedience and faith.

In the sacrament of Baptism, it is *not only* a sign of profession, a rite of initiation into the church of our choice, but also a sign of regeneration and inner cleansing,—the new birth. It is the means whereby we are grafted into the Body of Christ, which is the Living Church. It is *not only* an act of dedication, but also a means of grace "whereby God doth work invisibly in us".

We cross a great bridge when we go from one side of the *"not only"* to the other,—from man's side to God's side, from the temporal to the eternal.

We go from the visible to the invisible; from the symbol to the reality; from the human side to the Divine; from meanings that we can put into words, to others that are inexpressible and must be accepted by faith and realized through experience because they belong in the realm of God's Holy Mysteries.

Just as the words, "not only", tie together the two parts of the definition, so the sacramental services in their entirety,—faith, obedience, prayer, the Word, and the use of simple symbolic elements, form a bridge between the temporal and spiritual worlds which enables us to apprehend spiritual realities and receive God's grace.

Something is missing in the preceding paragraph in that it gives the impression that God sits passively waiting until *we* perform certain acts of worship before He acts,—which, of course, is not true. His action is in the beginning as well as in the ending. He is the Alpha and the Omega of all worship. It is beautifully expressed in one of our hymns:

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;
It was not I that found, O Saviour true;
No, I was found of thee.

Thou didst reach forth thy hand and mine enfold;
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea;
'Twas not so much that I on thee took hold,
As thou, dear Lord, on me.

I find, I walk, I love, but O the whole
Of love is but my answer, Lord, to thee;
For thou wert long beforehand with my soul,
Always thou lovedst me. Amen. (Hymnal.)

To return to the Discipline: Again we quote: "Sacraments ordained by Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him. . . . And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome affect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul sayeth, 1 Cor. 11:29."

The words of St. Paul could well apply to either sacrament, but in this instance he was speaking specifically of the Lord's Supper.

What is meant by receiving the sacraments unworthily? We are taught that God requires certain conditions to be fulfilled before his grace is available to us,—humility, reverence, obedience, a penitent heart, an expectant faith, and love for God and for our fellowmen. Without these attributes, the sacraments become meaningless rites.

If St. Paul were writing to us today, one wonders if he would not add a warning against a perfunctory use of the ritual which is a part of the Sacramental service. The great expressions of prayer and praise and petition are, like the great hymns of the Church, a rich part of our Christian heritage. Parts of our liturgical service come from the earliest period of the history of the Church. No loftier expressions of worship can be found in the English language, but unless we make the prayers our own, unless behind them is the true spirit of prayer, they become merely *words.* Some one has said, "I'd rather bow down to wood and stone than worship God with words alone".

If rightly participated in, the service of ritual is a preparation for rightly or "worthily" receiving the sacraments. The Prelude, Call to Worship, Hymns of Praise, and Words of Preparation lead us to an awareness of God's presence and an attitude of worship. Then comes the Collect For Purity:—

> Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

An examination of conscience follows in which the two great commandments of our Lord are held up by which to measure our lives, and in the light of that standard, how could we respond in any way but, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep thy laws?"

In the general Confession, we join with the whole Church in a corporate confession of sin. As members of a body, when one member sins, the entire body is hurt, so in the general confession we share the guilt and failures of the whole Church and seek God's forgiveness.

The Assurance of Pardon, the Prayer of Intercession, the

Lessons from the Scripture, and our Declaration of Faith, lead us step by step to a deeper awareness of God.

The sermon, the hymns, the offertory are all parts of the corporate worship of the church family.

We arrive at a place in the ritual where we are invited to step up to a higher plane:

> "Lift up your hearts!"
> "We lift them up unto the Lord."

Here the great mystery of the unseen world confronts us, as we find ourselves surrounded by "angels and archangels and all the Company of heaven" and we are no longer worshiping with a small church family, but with all the "hosts of heaven", with the whole mystical Body of Christ's Church, both here and in the spiritual world. Our voices join with theirs in one of the highest expressions of worship ever offered, the Sanctus:

> Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.
> Heaven and earth are full of thy glory,
> Glory be to thee O Lord Most High! Amen.

And so on, through the prayer of consecration, and the Communion of the minister and of the people:

> "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy soul and body unto everlasting life . . . feed on him in your hearts by faith, . . . with thanksgiving."
>
> "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee, preserve thy soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this . . . and be thankful."

After all have communed, we give expression to our thanks through the Prayer of Thanksgiving, and we voice our praise and adoration through the Gloria in Excelsis.

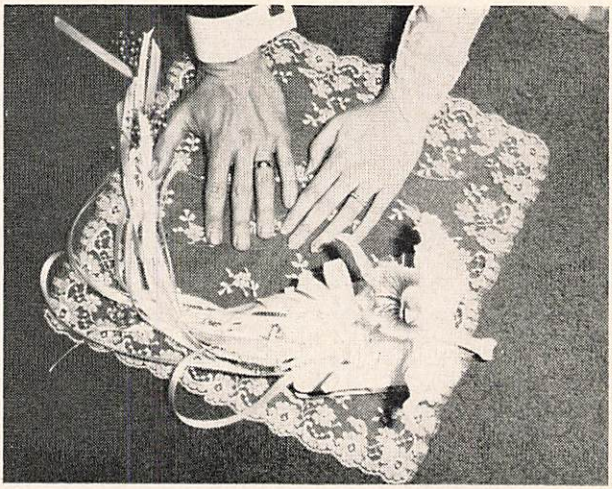
The Holy Communion is *not only* a sign of love and fellowship among Christians, but is also a sacrament of our redemption. *Not only* a memorial service in which we commemorate our Lord's death upon the cross, but also a perpetual proclamation and witness to our faith in the atonement. *Not only* a remembrance of our Lord's death, but an act of faith in his living Presence in the world today. *Not only* a partaking of physical elements of bread and wine, but also a partaking of spiritual food, whereby the very life of Christ becomes our food, and nourishes both our souls and our bodies. *Not only* a beautiful rite and ceremony, but a *means of grace, whereby God doth work invisibly in us!*

The service of Holy Communion is an act of highest dedication. It is the most sacred act of worship in the Church. The Holy Table represents a direct and unbroken historical continuity with the early Christian Church. It draws us to Christ and as we draw closer to him we are brought closer to our neighbors. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a link binding Christians together not only across the centuries but also across racial and national boundaries around the world.

It is a great and precious mystery beyond human comprehension, but Christians through all the ages and throughout the world witness to renewal of strength and to the Presence of Christ as with humility and faith they obey his command, *"Do this . . . in remembrance of me".*

This picture was taken immediately after a wedding at St. Mark's Methodist Church, Charleston, West Virginia.

Chapter VII



Weddings

DECORATING the church for weddings is not primarily the work of the Altar Guild, but it is well for the members to know how to do such work in case a need arises. And, since changing the hangings, changing the altar linen and candles and arranging the altar flowers is the responsibility of this group and should *not* be designated to anyone else, it is necessary for a member to be at the church when it is being decorated for a wedding.

When the decorating is done by florists or friends of the bride, it is helpful to have someone from the church there to answer any questions that might come up concerning church rules and procedure. A well-informed Altar Guild member can often be of assistance at this point. But such help must be tactfully and wisely given, or hurt feelings may result. Certainly every bride should have the right to plan the details of her wedding, and

there should be no appearance of trying to "dictate" or tell someone how it should be done, but only an answer to questions concerning church policy.

Many times things are done by florists and others which violate the spirit of the service, just through lack of understanding. It should be remembered that a church wedding is a service of worship and consecration,—a religious ceremony. The bride-to-be has a wide range of choices as to the kind of wedding she will have. It may be a civil ceremony, or she may plan a home wedding with a sacred and impressive service; or she may choose to be married in a garden, surrounded by beautiful flowers. But if she chooses to have the ceremony at the altar of the church, then certainly the church should not be turned into a garden scene, or the furniture moved out to make room for an elaborate floral display.

The church should be made as festive and beautiful as it is possible to make it, but it should keep the atmosphere and characteristics of a church,—a house of worship. The flowers, palms, potted greenery and candelabra should be carefully placed so as not to hide the altar or pulpit. As in all church decorating, everything should point to the altar. The use of greenery or other decorations on the kneeling rail should be discouraged.

Many churches have chapels in which small weddings are held. Because of the limited amount of space, there is greater danger of overdecorating these rooms than the church sanctuary. Often the result is a setting that bears no resemblance to a chapel, but rather resembles a florist shop. A much more beautiful effect will be achieved by more restraint in the amount of decorations that are used.

The discussion of one phase of the wedding service may not properly belong in an Altar Guild Manual, but a few thoughts concerning the music most frequently used are being offered as a matter of general interest. Many church leaders recognize the fact that much of this music is secular in nature, and is much

more suitable for use in the reception that follows the service than in the wedding service itself.

A number of very fine articles have been published in the church periodicals in recent years, suggesting the use of suitable hymns and other sacred music for weddings instead of the secular numbers, some of which have originated in pagan worship and ancient superstition. There are two beautiful hymns in The Methodist Hymnal *especially* fitting for the wedding service. However, since this is a service of worship and consecration, any hymn of praise may be used.

This does not mean that the bride is denied the use of traditional music, such as "I Love You Truly", "Always" and so forth, which most brides love, but the place for such music is at the reception, not in the church service.

We are quoting from "the Versicle", Eastertide, 1958, from an article by the Rev. Robert Vinson Gildner of First Methodist Church, Le Marrs, Iowa:

> A growing practice is to have communion following the wedding ritual, as a climax to the ceremony. This truly brings in the spiritual emphasis in making this the first devotion of the new couple. The practice spreads in a community very quickly. Once the first such wedding communion is held, other couples who hear of it, or witness it, wish it also. As a result all church weddings, and several in the chapel the past two years have requested communion. This practice does not do violence to our official rituals for it requires the complete use of the wedding ritual, and the complete use of the liturgy for Holy Communion for small groups, printed on pages 518-520 in the *Book of Worship.* The only additional thing needed is a connecting "announcement" paragraph.
>
> A silver chalice is used and the Bride and Groom drink from the same chalice. It is served only to

them. It is assumed the Minister partakes first and he may do this in any way he desires, but the simplest form is by intinction since it saves the bother of a separate cup, or chalice.

Some Methodist Churches have worked out an excellent plan for outlining the policy of the church with regard to weddings.

A mimeographed sheet of instructions is prepared and a copy given to each bride at the time arrangements are made for the use of the church for the wedding. The idea of having a definite church policy outlined seems very helpful to those concerned.

A suggestion for such a set of instructions is given below. However, this is merely a suggestion, and while it met the need in one particular church, may of necessity vary in others.

A MESSAGE TO THE BRIDE

We of.....Church are happy that you are having your wedding in the Church. We wish you every happiness in your new life.

Questions are often asked concerning the arrangement of the church for weddings. The Minister and a committee from the Altar Guild have worked out a procedure for this particular church, which we are giving you for your convenience. For your further help, a member of the Altar Guild will be glad to be at the church to give any needed assistance in planning decorations. You may reach her through the church office.....

The church can be made as festive and beautiful as it is possible to make it, but it should keep the atmosphere of a church,—a House of Worship. It should be remembered that a church wedding is a service of worship and consecration;—a religious ceremony, and all preparations should be made with this in mind.

SPECIFIC REQUESTS:

No pictures shall be taken *during* the wedding ceremony, but the minister will pose with wedding party either before or after the ceremony.

No rice shall be used in the church parlors or any part of the building.

"The flowers, palms, potted greenery and candelabra should be carefully placed so as not to hide the altar or pulpit. As in all church decorating, everything should be arranged to direct the attention toward the altar.

Do not use greenery or decorations on the kneeling rail. Do not use thumb tacks or Scotch tape anywhere in the church. No church furniture should be moved. Care should be taken that no decorations are in the way of the minister's entrance.

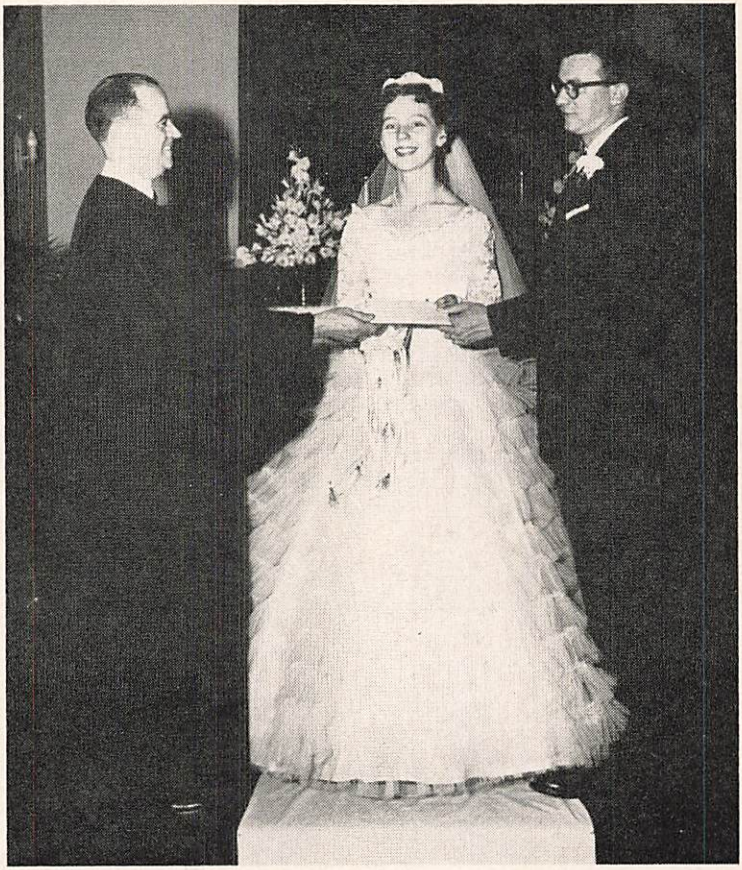
No decorations are placed on the altar other than the regular altar ornaments,—the cross and candles and flowers in the altar vases.

Acolytes are trained to assist in the services, and if you are using candelabra or any lighted candles, they will be glad to light them.

If you are planning a reception in the Fellowship Hall, please consult.....

No charge is made for the use of the church for weddings, but a fee of.....should be paid to the care-taker for his services, and a fee of.....to the organist. If you plan to use your own organist, please consult the church organist .....for approval.

If any further information or assistance is desired, call the church office, ..., and we shall be glad to serve you.



Chapter VIII

Flowers In The Church

"And Ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly tree, branches of Palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and Ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God."—Leviticus 23:40

SO SPOKE THE LORD UNTO MOSES. Then, as now, flowers and branches found their place in God's house.

All over this land of ours, from the smallest chapel to the largest cathedral, wherever we worship, there are flowers—symbols of the resurrection.

The flowers may be arranged by a florist or by faithful women of the church. All too frequently they are overdone.

How may we plan our church decorations so that they are really a part of the worship service and not a florist display? This can best be accomplished by those who take a little time to study the need and type of arrangement;—those whose duty it is to care for the sanctuary.

First we should keep in mind the architecture of the church, its size and for what purpose or occasion flowers are to be used. Flowers should harmonize with the color scheme of the church furnishings. They should be large and colorful enough to be seen from the back pews, rather than from a close range. Small pastel flowers lose their effectiveness when seen from a distance. They may well be used in a very small chapel.

To achieve a beautifully decorative effect doesn't depend on the flowers alone—but on how well they are used. An arrangement with definite form is best. It may be a triangle, oval or a mass arrangement. Care should be exercised to not give a "stuffed" effect. Keep all lines sharp and defined, colors bold and harmonizing.

It is well to remember that the main effect of church decorations should always lead the eye to the altar. Care should be used in placing flowers. Do not place them too near the candles, for long stems or branches may catch fire. Never let flowers or foliage overshadow the cross nor place flowers in front of the cross. Vases may be used either on the outside or between the cross and candles, if used on the altar.

There are many beautiful wild flowers growing in fields and woods throughout the country, which are suitable to use, such as the wild aster, wild pink, goldenrod, black-eyed Susan, wild rose, oxeye daisy, calico aster and many more. Before wild flowers or foliage are used it would be well, in your own locality, to check with the office of the conservation commission.

A good way to arrange flowers is to build your form in your hand, first use your basic background foliage (measuring your flower height proportionately—not more than twice the length of the vase). Tie this with green linen or button thread to keep its shape—still holding the form, begin to arrange the flowers. Follow a definite line to achieve the desired effect. Again tie with thread, just wrap two or three times around to the right, then to the left and slip end up through stems and cut. Now place arrangement in vase without frog. Use discarded stem

ends for filler which are to be tied in with the flowers. This makes a much more pliable arrangement. Fill in any open space with additional flowers and foliage to finish the arrangement. Do not strive for exact likeness when using twin vases, but have the arrangements nearly alike. If flowers are to be sent to the hospital or to a shut-in after service; just lift them out of the vase—they will keep their shape beautifully. Much time will be saved when they reach their destination, for all that is needed is a vase of water, and just slip them in.

Flowers last longer if properly treated. Use water at room temperature. Burn stems on poppies, dahlias and roses before placing in water. Daffodils, jonquils, tulips and irises keep longer if the stems are split to allow the water to be drawn up. Bruise stems on lilacs. Poinsettias, one of the most beautiful and long lasting flowers, needs a special processing. At least a week before time for cutting poinsettias, strip from the stems all foliage that will not be needed for arrangement. Remember, though, to leave enough leaves near the blossom—and only enough—to make an attractive arrangement. Because if you remove a single leaf after cutting you have ruined your poinsettia.

The afternoon before you want to arrange the flowers, take a covered pan of boiling water with you and as you cut the poinsettia, the exact length you desire, plunge the stems into the boiling water about one inch. Hold it there a minute or so in order to seal the stem. Remove from water and put to one side, repeating this process with each poinsettia as you cut it, until all are sealed. Next fill your bath tub or some other large utensil with cold water and submerge the poinsettias with the face of the flowers downward. Have poinsettias entirely covered with the cold water and leave over night. The next day remove from utensil, shake off the water, and make your arrangement, but don't cut a single stem!

This may sound like a lot of work, but you will be amply repaid for your trouble. Your poinsettias will be beautiful for several days.

Don't forget to measure stems carefully as you cut them. Have variable lengths, for here again, no cutting of the stems may be done after processing.

Flowers should not be used during Holy Week.

The use of vases of flowers *on* the altar is prevalent, but according to best tradition, not correct. They should be placed on stands at each end of the altar, or on brackets fastened to the wall. Small vases, or vases with a small neck should be avoided.

Foliage:

There are many kinds of foliage that may be used. However, if you are using flowers from your own garden, much of the foliage is there also. Iris leaves are particularly good, as are the leaves from roses, ivy, geranium and canna. Others which may be purchased from the florist are, huckleberry, privit, galax leaves, spiral or flat eucalyptus. And of course the fern either from the florist or from the woodlands. An arrangement backed by a fan of evergreen is very pretty. These are just a few suggestions.

Christmas:

"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my Sanctuary".—Isaiah 60:13

Isaiah, more than any other prophet, was able to look into the future and foretell the coming of our Lord. Was there also a prophetic touch to the words above as to the manner in which we observe and decorate for the Christmas season? These evergreens and the holly have played an important part in our Christmas decorations. However, they should be used with restraint, never losing sight of the fact that the true spirit of this season is one of worship. Used simply, they too can be an offering and aid to the worship service.

Lilies, roses, poinsettias, and gladioli are very good for the season being observed. All white flowers too, are appropriate, as

they carry the symbolical message of purity which belongs to this occasion. Though colored flowers may also be used.

Nothing adds more to the beauty and solemnity of the Christmas season than candles. Long have they been associated with the joy of Christmas. Fresh ones should be placed on the altar for this occasion. Candles, encircled with wreaths of evergreen or garlands of holly are very effective when placed in window sills of the church.

One candle stands for Son of Man, Son of God.
Three candles, The Holy Trinity.
Five—branch candles—the wounds of Christ.
Six candles, The six days of Creation.
Seven candles, The gifts of the Spirit.

Easter:

"Arise, shine; for Thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—Isaiah 60:1

The joyous season of Easter is portrayed in the words of Isaiah. The resurrection of our Lord is the most important festival of the Christian Year, and is the center of the great liturgical cycle.

Flower decorations should be in keeping with the size of your church, and the type of service planned. Simplicity is the keynote to follow even for this joyous occasion. Use nothing that will detract from the altar. The main and central effect should always lead the eye to the altar.

Flowers do have a language of their own, and certain flowers are associated with special occasions. For that reason it seems the lily is foremost for Easter. But there are other flowers also appropriate; such as roses, carnations and jonquils. The dogwood and other flower-bearing trees are very good.

If your church is planning a simple program, you will want your decorations quiet and subdued . . . but the effect should carry the message of victory and triumph. Know first the effect

you wish to create, then plan accordingly. It isn't necessary or important, to have a lot of expensive flowers, but it is important how well you use what you do have.

Funerals:

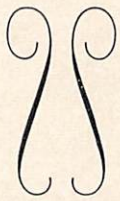
In no service of the church are flowers so *misused* as they are for funerals. Too often the deceased is only a small part of the service. The display of flowers is more talked about than the sympathy expressed on such a solemn occasion.

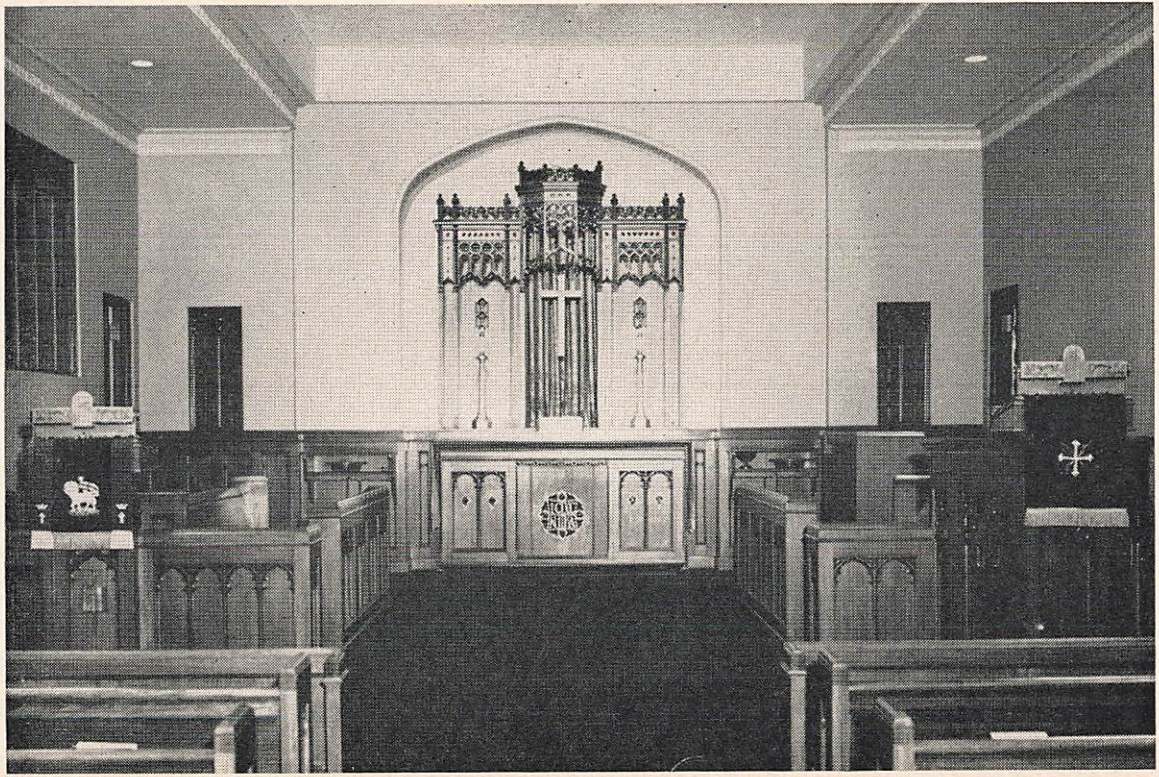
Because there are people who like the custom of sending flowers upon the death of a loved one or friend, we feel that a word concerning this subject is important. Some families prefer that only the flowers from the family be brought into the church, and the remaining ones be taken to hospitals, shut-ins or on to the cemetery. While other families ask that flowers be omitted entirely, realizing that some people find the lovely thought of contributing money to a charity or medical fund, in memory of the deceased, more satisfying than sending flowers. In this way much can be done to relieve the suffering of the world.

The process of Christianization has kept pace in some areas of life, while in others, we remain pagan.

The family blanket or spray over the casket, and a basket of flowers at the head and foot, make a suitable arrangement.

PART II





Church of Christ, Church Methodist, Charleston, West Virginia

Chapter IX

A Message To Altar Guild Members

PERHAPS YOU do not call yourselves by that name. You may be a worship committee, or chancel committee; but under whatever name you may function, you make up the group to whom has been entrusted the care of the sanctuary and its furnishings, all the things that pertain to the worship services. As members of such a group, you have a peculiar responsibility and a high privilege.

From the earliest records of Old Testament worship and through the entire story of Israel's growth and development, God seemed to be teaching his people that things set apart and consecrated to sacred uses should be given reverent care. That was God's way of helping them to develop an inner quality of reverence which is an essential part of a devout character. That reverence should reach out into all areas of life as we see God's handiwork in His entire creation. In what better way can one develop it than by *practicing* reverence *with intensity* in some small area of life? And in what better place can we begin such training than in the loving, reverent care which we give to God's House?

Now of course, there is a danger here, as there is danger of going to an extreme in anything we do. Whatever our work or interest, it is always important to find a "balance", lest we go too far in one direction or another. In the care of churches, one extreme is just about as detrimental to the true spirit of worship as the other.

On the one hand, there is the careless, slipshod attitude which is indifferent to dust and disorder, spotted, rumpled linens, quality of furnishings, and which ignores the heritage of the

past. If you have ever tried to worship in a church where such a condition exists, didn't you find the physical surroundings distracting and "jarring"? Didn't you find it difficult to enter whole heartedly into the service?

But the other extreme is just as bad. It is to become so enamored with the furnishings, and with the form and beauty of the physical setting, that "things" become an end in themselves rather than the means to an end. This attitude *could* become almost a form of idolatry, where the object of our worship is a beautiful church and the things in it that are pleasing to the eye.

It is between these two extremes that we find our "balance". It is right and fitting that we put our very best efforts and taste into the furnishings and care of the church. All the beauty and color in the world has been created by our Heavenly Father, and surely we want to make use of them to beautify His house.

A spotlessly clean orderly building, hangings of color and beauty, fair linens, symbolic objects that call to mind the great truths of the gospel, all these are necessary and right. But the purpose of them is to provide a setting that will draw the attention of the congregation to something beyond themselves; to a consciousness of the Presence of "One greater than the temple". Every detail of the work of your committee is for the purpose of honoring Him.

An understanding of the meaning of corporate worship and the traditions of the church, familiarity with the sign language of our faith and the significance of the objects with which you work will add joy and meaning to your task. And of course every committee member should become familiar with Methodist Ritual and aids to worship.

A story is told of three workmen who were doing an identical work. A passerby asked each one of them what he was doing. One replied, "I am laying bricks". The second said, "I am helping to erect a wall". But the third answered, "I am building a cathedral".

Men *build,* but women are the "housekeepers". Most churches have paid caretakers, but as in the home, there are many small details of housekeeping, many "extra" touches that just naturally belong to interested women.

And so you see, as you look at your housekeeping job as a part of the entire church program, it is no longer a dull, humdrum task, but a joyful service. Nothing is insignificant if it contributes to something vital and important.

We hope you will find as much pleasure in using this manual as we have found in the preparation of it.

". . . We will not neglect the house of our God."
Nehemiah 10:39

First Methodist Church, Winter Park, Florida.

Chapter X

The Altar Guild

"Duty makes us do things well;
Love makes us do things beautifully."
—Phillip Brooks

THE ALTAR GUILD exists to assist the minister and is always under his direction.

There is a need in all Methodist Churches (and especially those churches which have adopted the church calendar and are using the seasonal colors and paraments) for a special group whose duty it is to care for all furnishings in the church which pertain to the worship services.

Caring for God's house, keeping it beautiful and immaculately clean, is not only a duty but also a privilege. Between the place where the paid caretaker's work stops and the minister's work begins, there is opportunity for many expressions of loving service.

The nature of Altar Guild work makes this group peculiarly the minister's committee. All members are appointed by the minister and confirmed by the Quarterly Conference and are responsible to the minister instead of to an organization within the church. Members would, of course, include the Communion

Stewards and the Flower chairman, and it is good to have one of the leaders in the field of music in the church as a member. All members chosen should be women who have an understanding and appreciation of the meaning of corporate worship, or at least an inner urge to cultivate that interest.

The work of the Altar Guild is a sacred trust, and calls for women who are consecrated to the task, and who are willing to place love for Christ and His Church above personal feeling. It calls for women who are willing to work in the background, without recognition or praise from the congregation, for the most successful Altar Guild member is one who is most self effacing and inconspicuous in her work. The group should not be too large; not more than twenty-four members unless it is a very large church.

Should there at any time be a difference of opinion between the minister and a member of the Altar Guild, the member should conform to the minister's wishes or resign from the group.

Preparation for services of Holy Communion is the most important part of the work of an Altar Guild. This phase of the work is done under the direction of the minister, who will instruct the Communion Stewards as to their specific duties.

The Communion Stewards by the manner in which they do the work entrusted to them, can do much to add to, or detract from, the beauty and meaning of the supreme service of worship—the service of Holy Communion.

The minister will probably advise concerning a plan for the reverent disposal of the left over elements of the Communion

service. The consecrated wine should never be poured down the sink, or the bread put in the garbage can. Nor should the wine be put back into the container to be used another time. If the minister and his assistants do not consume it, as is done in some churches, the wine may be poured on mother earth, and the bread given to the birds.

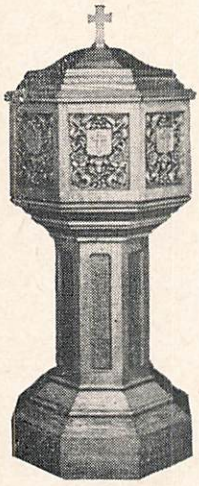
In every parish there are those who, by reason of infirmity or age are unable to attend the regular services of the church. It is important that these be given an opportunity to partake of the Lord's Supper in their own homes. In this part of the Church's ministry, the members of the Altar Guild can render a valuable service in assisting the minister.

Every shut-in or person who is ill should be acquainted with the fact that the minister is always ready to administer this service in the homes upon request. The Altar Guild could arrange the details of such services, notifying the person in advance of the time when the minister will call. Some churches have found it helpful to designate a date on the church calendar each month for taking the Lord's Supper to the sick, providing also for taking care of special needs at other times as well.

In preparation for these services, the Altar Guild should provide some symbols of our faith for a worship center, preferably a small home altar set. This need not be expensive. While such sets are available in brass, a small cross made of wood in a natural finish and a pair of inexpensive candle holders will serve as well. Also, a small scarf or table cover of fair linen and a twelve- or fifteen-inch square of fair linen for covering the elements will be needed. Most ministers have an individual communion set for taking the service of Holy Communion to the sick, but where the minister does not have one, the Altar Guild may want to provide him with one. They can be ordered from the Methodist Publishing House at a small cost.

If agreeable to the minister, two members of the Altar Guild may accompany him to the home, and attend to arranging the

setting for the service, and preparing the elements. A rule previously given should be followed here, and all preparations be made as quietly and unobtrusively as possible. A small table should be covered with the linen scarf or cover and the altar set placed thereon, and the candles lighted. If convenient to do so, the elements can be prepared in another room, placing the filled glasses and the miniature plate of wafers on a small tray or plate. These should be placed on the table and covered with the square of fair linen. An effort should be made to put as much meaning and reverence and beauty into the simple home service as into the larger church service. Would it not be helpful if members of classes training for church membership could memorize some of the most important parts of the Communion ritual? Or perhaps such an experiment could begin with the Altar Guild, who would voluntarily memorize the service as nearly as possible.



Another important duty is caring for the baptismal font which is sometimes overlooked in our program for church care. The baptismal font is an important object in the church, being used in connection with one of the sacramental services, and should be accorded the same reverent care as is given to all sanctuary furnishings.

Our Discipline says, in regard to baptism, "This sacrament may be administered by sprinkling, pouring or immersion".

At this point may we mention an observation made as we have visited Methodist churches in preparation of this book. i.e. the complete absence of any provision for baptism by immersion or the terribly neglected condition of baptistry pools that have been provided.

We remember in particular, one church, in which the baptismal pool was in a dark corner in the basement with nothing to suggest its relation to worship. At the request of the minister, the Altar Guild took over the improvement and care of it, making it a place of beauty, suggesting its Holy purpose.

In order to work efficiently, the Altar Guild must have storage place for linens and vestments, and working space for the preparation for the Lord's Supper and for arranging candles and flowers. The ideal plan is to have a small room for these purposes, as close to the chancel as possible. Such a room is called a Sacristy, and should have adequate cupboard space in which to keep the Communion vessels, candles, vases, etc. There should be drawers for storing hangings and linens, and the room should contain a table on which to prepare the Communion elements and a small sink, with hot and cold water. Everything needed in the way of cleaning equipment should have its own storage space here. A sheet of instructions for routine weekly care should be fastened to the cupboard door, and a church calendar should be kept handy.

Here again many churches have not been able to follow the ideal plan, but have had to share a room with the choir or prepare the Communion elements in the kitchen. How ironic it is that Methodist building plans provide kitchens that are the last word in beauty and efficiency, and dining rooms equipped with every facility for comfort and convenience for fellowship meals, and yet make no provision for the Holy Meal which we call the Lord's Supper! The answer to this need is that a working Sacristy be included in every building plan. So, as Altar Guild members, let us say with a loud and clear voice to our Building Committees, "NEEDED! A GOOD WORKING SACRISTY."!

It goes without saying that the general spirit and purpose of the Altar Guild should carry over into the work period, and into the manner in which equipment is cared for between uses. The

same order and neatness found in the church should be found in the Sacristy. If a motto is needed, what better one could be found than the oft' quoted one of John Wesley: "Cleanliness is next to Godliness".

Smocks should be worn while working and these can be stored in the sacristy. Purple is a suitable and practical color for these.

The Discipline says the minister shall uncover and recover the elements of Holy Communion, but in many cases it is impossible for the minister to do this alone. Ushers should not be expected to do this work. Altar Guild members, being Communion Stewards, should render this service. If members of the Altar Guild assist in this way they should be suitably dressed. For uniformity, a simple white tunic style dress belted with a gold or white cord is a good choice.

DUTIES

To work under the direction of the minister in preparation for all sacraments and other worship services of the church.

To care for and store Communion vessels, church linens, hangings and vestments.

To care for the Baptismal Font, provide water for baptisms, and clean basin afterward.

To provide candles and arrange flowers for the altar.

To keep all brass altar furnishings polished.

To change seasonal colors when the church calendar is followed.

To advise concerning chancel arrangements for any special services, such as weddings or funerals or candlelight services when such advice is requested.

To assist in planning worship centers in other parts of the church, such as the rooms of the church school, when such help is requested.

To interpret the symbolism of the church to visitors or to groups within the church.

Helpful Suggestions:

Two members should always work together.

A linen huck towel should be placed on the side of the baptismal font or nearby, for the use of the minister at baptismal services.

Altar Flowers are often given as memorials. Many churches have the lovely custom of sending flowers from the Altar to the sick with a card such as this:

> These flowers from the Altar of ..... Church are sent to assure you that you are remembered in the prayers offered there. May they bring you something of the peace and blessing of God's House.

Flowers should never be allowed to wilt on the Altar.

Water should never be left in the baptismal font.

Empty offering plates should not be left on the Altar, but should have a suitable storing place.

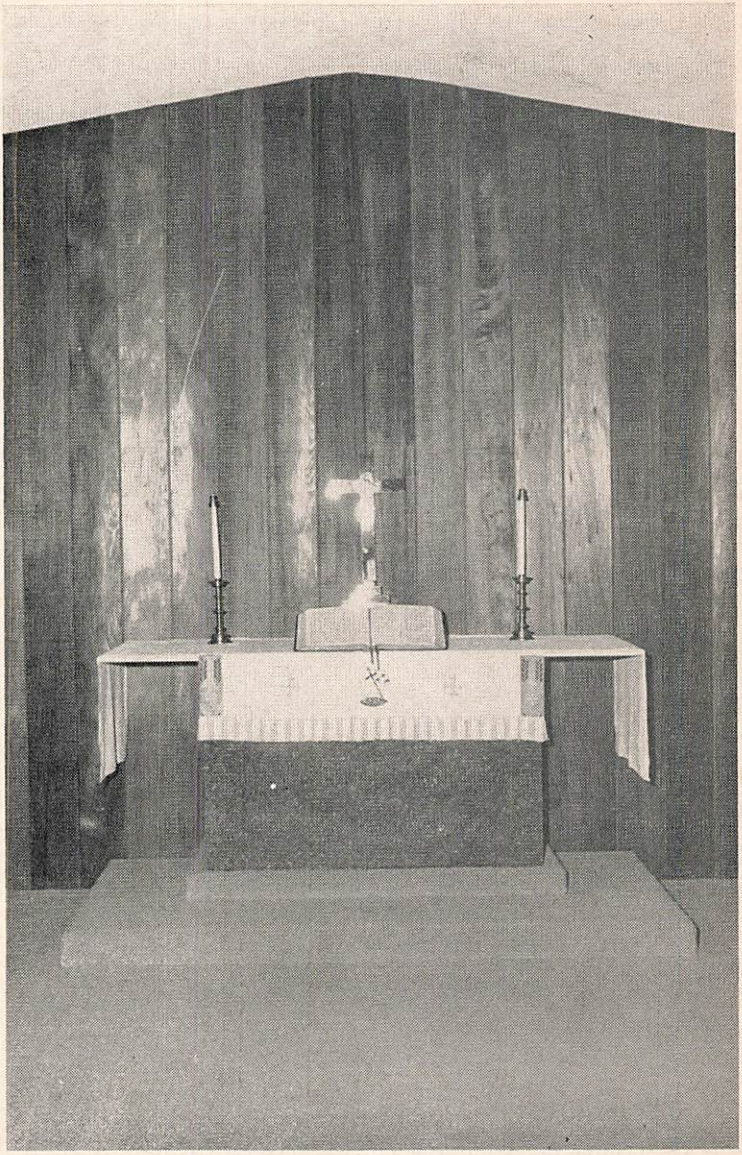
Empty vases should not be left on the Altar as they are not Altar ornaments.

There is some shrinkage to linen, so be sure to either preshrink or to allow for shrinkage when making Fair Linen.

To launder linen, first soak in cold water, then wash in hot water and soap flakes. Rinse in several waters until water is clear, and either dry in the sun, then dampen and iron, or roll between Turkish towels for awhile and iron while still damp. It is a good idea to boil linen occasionally. First wash and rinse as directed above, then put linen in clean, cold water with soap flakes and boil for about ten minutes. Then rinse again until water is clear.

Simple to make, yet comfortable and attractive, is this smock by Simplicity, pattern No. 4979.

Hammond Memorial Methodist Church, Clarksburg, West Virginia.



Carol City Methodist Church, Miami, Florida.

Stains should be removed from material before laundering. Soap and hot water and ironing have a tendency to set stains. To remove grape juice from linen, stretch material tightly over a bowl, and holding the teakettle some distance above it, pour boiling water through the material. Then wash in the usual manner. If any stubborn stain still remains, us a mild bleach or lemon juice. Rinse well and dry in the sun. Linen may safely be washed in an automatic washer.

Be sure storage space is well ventilated and dry to prevent mildew. If there is any dampness in cupboards, there are a number of preparations on the market which will eliminate it, such as mildewcide.

To remove mildew stain, use Clorox or some other good bleach. Care should be taken, however, in using any kind of bleach, for if the solution is too strong or the material remains in it too long, it will weaken the fibre. A medicine dropper may be helpful in applying bleach to a small spot.

Wax may be removed from linen or silk by placing the finger underneath the material and gently lifting wax with the blade of a pen knife. If a spot remains, place a blotter over it and press with a hot iron. Wax may be removed from carpet by using a blotter and hot iron.

Linen should preferably be laundered by members of the Altar Guild. If it is necessary to get some one else to do them, perhaps a member of the parish could be paid to launder all the church linen.

No starch should be used when laundering linen.

To clean candles, wipe with a cloth dipped in turpentine. Candles should be carefully fitted into the candlestick. A piece of surgeon's plaster bound around the bottom where it will not show will hold a candle in place.

A good Chamois skin for use in cleaning is a good investment.

Altar and pulpit hangings may be cleaned by sending to a reliable dry cleaner.

Routine Weekly Cleaning:

1. Clean and dust all furniture in the chancel and sanctuary.

2. Change hangings according to church calendar, using seasonal colors. A calendar, with church seasons and colors marked, should hang near the storage cupboard.

3. If fair linen needs laundering, replace it with fresh linen. Church linen should never be sent to the laundry, but should be carefully hand-laundered or washed in a good automatic washer. It is better not to fold linen after ironing. Instead, it should be rolled on a tube.

4. Clean all altar brass, using a chamois skin. Before leaving the factory, most brass altar ware is treated with a protective coat of lacquer to prevent tarnishing. This will protect it for several years if no cleaning method is used that will affect the lacquer. For that reason, no soap and water should be used and no brass polishing agent. A little sweet oil may be used occasionally and the polishing done with a chamois and gloves should be worn when handling lacquered ware. When, however, altar ware is used without the lacquer coating, a different cleaning procedure is necessary, and a good brass polish must be used. Lacquer may be removed by using a good solvent which can be purchased at a paint store, or there are professional refinishers who will remove lacquer and put on a new coating, or burnish the brass so it can be used without lacquer. If members of the Altar Guild are willing to give extra care to the brass ware, it will have an added beauty without the lacquer coating.

5. Trim candle wicks and remove all wax that has dripped. Sometimes it is necessary to use a little warm water to soften wax on candlesticks but this should be carefully done.

If candles have burned down to about two inches, replace with new candles. Or for special days such as Christmas, Easter or weddings, fresh candles should be used even if the ones already in use have not burned low enough to be discarded. They can be put back for use at another time. Wax-savers will prolong the life of candles as well as protect the flame from drafts. Also prevents messy dripping of tallow. These may be purchased from your supply house to match your brass altarware. Order by number to fit your particular candle. Candles are better made of beeswax.

6. Arrange flowers.

An occasional thorough "housecleaning" of all chancel furniture by members of the Altar Guild may be necessary, when soap and water are used, and a good coat of wax given to the furniture.

At this point a story comes to mind. It is told by Dr. Willard L. Sperry in his book, "Reality in Worship".

A Protestant minister was being taken through a Catholic mission and at one place, in a dark corner behind the organ, a lay brother was on his knees scrubbing the floor. "Why are you cleaning here?" the Protestant minister asked. "Does anyone ever come to this part of the church?" "No", was the reply. "People seldom come here, but we keep this corner clean for the eye of God". One can't help but wonder if all the dark corners in our Methodist churches would pass inspection by the "Eye of God".

Service for Admission Into an Altar Guild

In Unison:

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Gregorian Sacramentary, A. D. 570)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Minister: O LORD, SEND OUT THY LIGHT AND THY TRUTH, THAT THEY MAY LEAD ME,

Response: AND BRING ME INTO THY HOLY HILL AND TO THY DWELLING;

Minister: AND THAT I MAY GO UNTO THE ALTAR OF GOD,

Response: EVEN UNTO THE GOD OF MY JOY AND GLADNESS;

Minister: GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY GHOST,

Response: AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE, WORLD WITHOUT END, AMEN.

Choral Response or in Unison:

MY VOICE SHALT THOU HEAR BETIMES, O LORD; EARLY IN THE MORNING WILL I DIRECT MY PRAYERS UNTO THEE AND WILL LOOK UP.

In Unison: Psalm 67

GOD BE MERCIFUL UNTO US, AND BLESS US, AND SHOW US THE LIGHT OF HIS COUNTENANCE, AND BE MERCIFUL UNTO US;

THAT THY WAY MAY BE KNOWN UPON EARTH, THY SAVING HEALTH AMONG ALL NATIONS.

LET THE PEOPLES PRAISE THEE, O GOD, YEA, LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE THEE.

O LET THE NATIONS REJOICE AND BE GLAD; FOR THOU SHALT JUDGE THE FOLK RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GOVERN THE NATIONS UPON THE EARTH.

LET THE PEOPLES PRAISE THEE, O GOD; YEA, LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE THEE.

THEN SHALL THE EARTH BRING FORTH HER INCREASE; AND GOD, EVEN ONR OWN GOD, SHALL GIVE US HIS BLESSING.

GOD SHALL BLESS US; AND ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH SHALL FEAR HIM.

Minister: WHAT DO YOU DESIRE?

Answer: I desire to serve as a member of the Altar Guild of ..... church.

Minister: DO YOU PROMISE TO BE REVERENT IN THOUGHT AND ACT IN THE DISCHARGE OF SUCH DUTIES?

Answer: I do.

Minister: WILL YOU DO YOUR WORK WITH FAITHFULNESS AND REGULARITY?

Answer: I shall endeavor to do so.

Minister: GOD, WHO HAS GIVEN YOU A GOODWILL, GRACIOUSLY FULFILL THE SAME IN YOU. I ADMIT YOU TO SERVE IN PREPARATION AND CARE OF THE ALTAR, AS A MEMBER OF THE ALTAR GUILD.

Let us pray
(Prayer by the Minister)
Blessing

HYMN

Prayer Suitable for an Altar Guild

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst accept the ministry of faithful women during Thy earthly life: We pray Thee to accept and bless the work which this Altar Guild undertakes in the care of Thy Sanctuary; Grant us a spirit of reverence for Thy House and Worship, Thy Word and Sacraments, and preserve in purity and holiness our own souls and bodies as living temples of Thy presence, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit we give praise and honour, now and forever. Amen.

(Treasury of Devotion)
—From Altar Guild Manual—
Morehouse-Gorham—Edith Weir Perry.

Suggestions for Study

The Book of Common Prayer
The Book of Worship for the Methodist Church
The Methodist Hymnal
"Within the Chancel" by Dr. Thomas A. Stafford
"Methodist Altars" by Arnett and Clark
"Christian Worship" by George Hedley
"Christian Symbolism" by Dr. Thomas A. Stafford
"The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism"
by John C. Bowmer

Westerville Methodist Church, Westerville, Ohio

Chapter XI

Paraments

"And all the women who had ability spun with their hands and brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen." Exodus 35:25

"And of the blue and purple and scarlet they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place." Exodus 39:1

"And gold leaf was hammered out and cut into threads to work into the blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and into the twined linen in skilled design." Exodus 39:3

WOMEN HAVE always liked to create from beautiful fabrics and colors even as far back as the time of Moses and still find joy in making "service cloths" to adorn the House of Worship.

All the linens and vestments used on the Altar, pulpit and lectern are called paraments, but are sometimes referred to as "hangings". Paraments in the color representing particular seasons of the Christian Year provide an expression helpful to worship. This chapter will be devoted to detailed instructions for buying or making paraments.

The mensa of the Altar should be vested with three white linen cloths. The foundation cloth of coarse linen, plainly hemmed and waxed to give protection, should be exactly the size of the mensa. The next cloth should be the same size as the first and if a superfrontal is used it is attached to this cloth at the front and perhaps extending around each end. These linens may be coarser than the fair linen, which lays on top. Fair linen should be made of a very fine quality of plain white linen. Linen materials of suitable widths and qualities may be obtained from church furnishing houses.

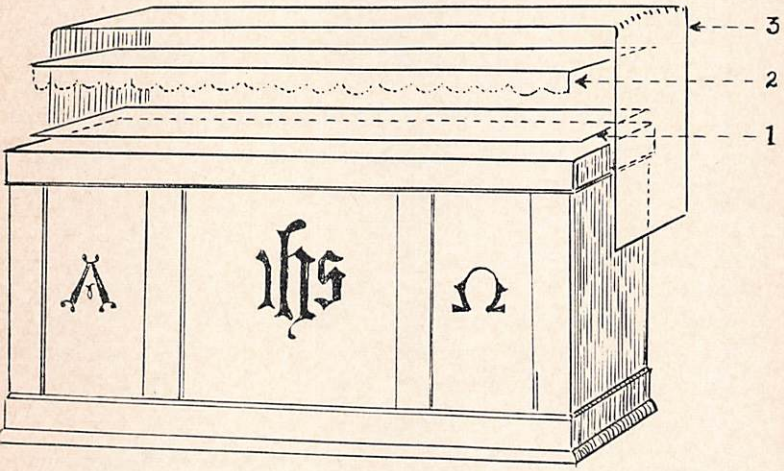
Chancel and Sanctuary of Trinity Methodist Church, Springfield, Mass.

A VESTED ALTAR

(1) Foundation cloth of coarse linen, usually waxed, and called a cere cloth.

(2) This is the cloth to which the frontlet is attached. It is usually made of coarse linen but may be of silk if preferred.

(3) Fair Linen.

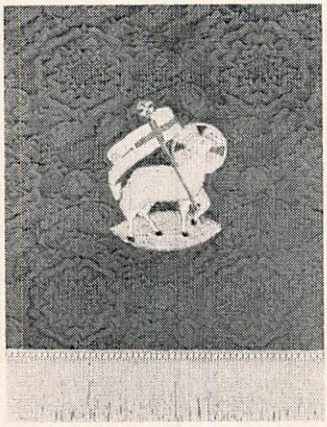


The fair linen is the same width as the mensa and long enough to descend to within a few inches from the floor. It should be hand hemmed with a one-inch hem on the sides and a three-inch hem on the ends, with mitered corners. There is some shrinkage to linen, so it must be preshrunk before used. Hemming should be on the straight of the material which can be determined by pulling a thread. Slip stitch with linen thread or waxed mercerized cotton thread catching one thread of the top layer as you hem and stitching as close together as is possible. The stitching should be almost invisible on the right side. Hemstitching is not recommended since hemstitching will wear out much sooner. A protector cloth of cotton or linen should cover the fair linen when there are no services.

Another fair linen cloth will be needed to cover the communion elements and its size will be determined by the amount

of material required to cover the trays used. A napkin-sized linen cover may be used to top the bread tray.

The making of church paraments in color requires careful study and planning. It is a job that calls for expert tailoring, for unless they are well made, they will be a great disappointment. Samples can be ordered to aid in selection from catalogues (see appendix). Study the symbolism woven into the materials available. If all the seasonal colors are to be used it is wise to draw a master plan at the beginning to include symbolism meaning desired, as well as appropriate embroidery motifs for each color. Symbols such as IHS or the cross are suitable for use on any color; others are not. The triangle symbols, for instance, are especially appropriate for green hangings, but not for the purple, on which a cross would be better. The lamb or dove is often used on red, and the spray of lilies on the white. These are only a few suggestions from a wide variety available in the church furnishing catalogues. If only one color is used, red is the appropriate choice.



It is economical as well as traditional to buy silk of the best quality as it holds its color better and dry cleans more satisfactorily through the years.

The Altar frontlet is attached to the linen cloth which is between the waxed protector cloth and the fair linen. It extends across the front of the Altar, or if a more tailored appearance is desired it extends around each end. The linen cloth to which the frontlet is attached should be anchored to the back of the Altar by means of a weighted rod or hooks and rings. Adopt a plan with simplicity and ease for changing the paraments. Since this frontlet will be at least seventy-two inches or longer if extended around the ends of the Altar, it will be necessary to piece the material. This should be accomplished at the ends rather than in the middle, making the seams as invisible as possible by matching the pattern in the material. The drop for the Altar frontlet should be from six to nine inches, or twelve at most for a large Altar, including the fringe. Usually symbolic embroidery graces this hanging.

Pulpit and lectern hangings should be slightly less than the width of the desk and vary in width from twelve inches to eighteen inches depending on the setting in which they are used. They may have a drop of varying lengths, good proportion being the rule to follow. The paraments can be attached by means of snap-on tape sewed on the paraments and attached to the pulpit or lectern or can be extended over the pulpit or lectern top and anchored by weighted rod. In some instances it may be desirable to omit a lectern hanging, placing only the two bookmarks in the Bible on the lectern. Bookmarks can be made of grosgrain ribbon approximately three inches wide or of matching silk brocade. The contrast of the grosgrain ribbon is pleasing, although silk brocade markers add the symbolism woven into their material as well as any appliqued motif that is used. Bible markers are anchored with a brass register in each ribbon on the plain end. The drop end is finished with a fringe. These markers should be used to mark the lessons or scripture readings for the day. They are not ornaments.

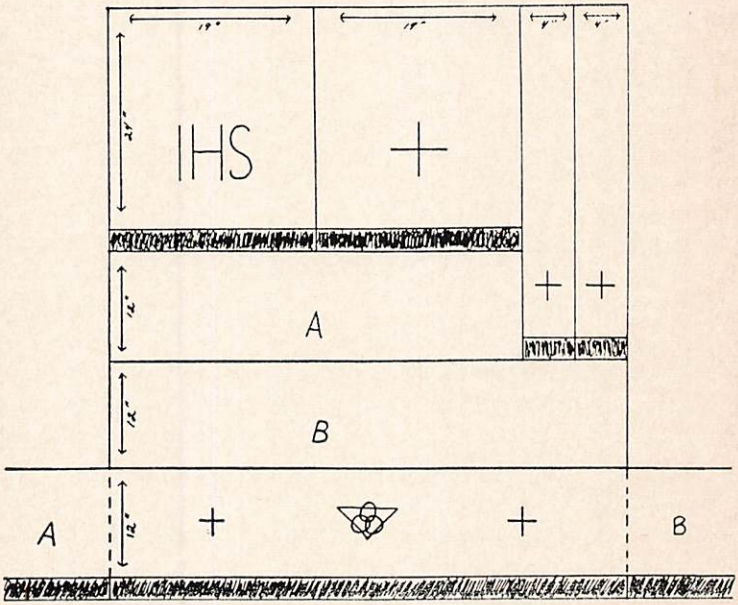
The following could be used as a guide in cutting a standard seventy-two inch Altar frontlet*, an eighteen-inch wide snap-on

pulpit drop, an eighteen-inch wide snap-on lectern drop, and two three-inch wide brocade Bible markers. Keep the pattern of symbolism foremost in mind and center patterns properly, matching at places where the frontlet must be pieced.

Before cutting make sure all materials are on grain by pulling a thread. Make haste slowly. Measure carefully, keeping the matching of the pattern uppermost in importance. Finish all edges immediately after cutting either by zigzag stitch by machine or overcast by hand to prevent raveling.

An embroidery frame that adjusts to the size of the material being sewn gives less chance of puckering and promotes a more

*This Altar frontlet extends across the front of the Altar and around the ends.



The materials needed are:

1 2/3 yd. brocade 50" wide (approximately)
2 1/2 yd. drill 30" wide
2 1/2 yd. muslin 35" wide
2 1/2 yd. satin 36" wide

4 3/4 yd. fringe
embroidered applique symbols
non-tarnishable metallic thread
silk thread
1 1/4 yd. snap-on tape
2 brass registers for anchoring Bible markers
weighted rod or hooks and rings for anchoring frontal cloth

evenly stitched product. Drill is used as an interfacing to give crispness or body and to help retain the shape and prevent sagging. Unless pre-shrunk, interfacings of drill and muslin must be thoroughly shrunk and pressed before cutting. Stitch the drill to the muslin 3/4 inch from the edge around the entire piece. Then tailor tack drill and muslin together with long stitches over the entire piece. Trim drill away close to stitching line to eliminate bulk in the seam. Lay muslin on frame. Place brocade right side up on top of muslin, basting edges together, stretching material until smooth and square. Baste the fringe in place. Pin the applique symbol to the brocade so that the location of the symbol to the fringe and the woven pattern of the material indicate a pleasing proportion. Observe the placement from a distance and, if possible, in the actual setting before further work. Since the fringe ravels easily, remove it while sewing the symbols in place. Baste the applique symbol or symbols in place through the brocade, muslin and drill. Fasten symbols securely with tiny stitches drawn invisibly through the embroidery motif. To finish the outlines of the symbols use gold metallic thread in a single or double strand. Gold silk thread is strong and hides itself in the twists of the metallic as the overcast stitches are placed closely together to guide the gold thread along the design.

Baste the fringe on the material so the edge of fringe will come to the bottom of the finished edge of the brocade. Fasten securely with small stitches of matching silk thread at the top edge of the fringe and again about one-half inch below the first stitching. Remove all bastings.

With right sides together baste the embroidered brocade with the inner linings stitched to it to the back satin lining at the

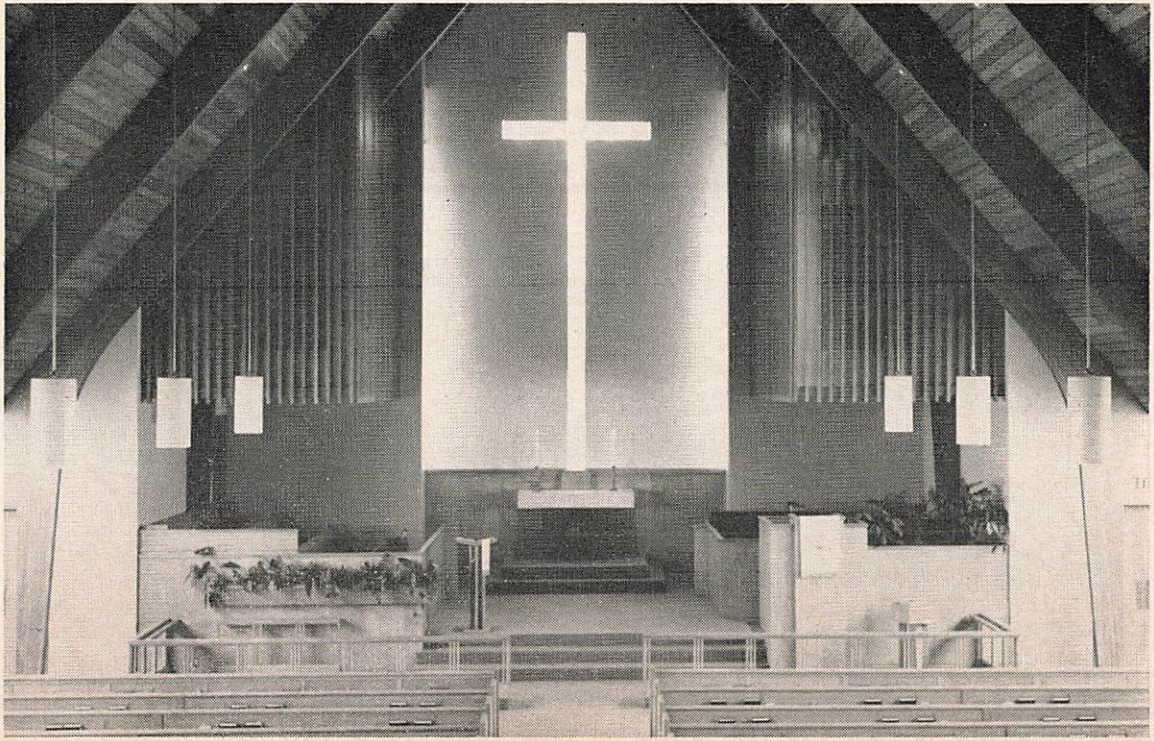
bottom edge only. Stitch a narrow seam across the bottom, being careful not to catch the fringe. Turn to right side and press lightly on the satin side to encourage a sharp edge. Turn so the right sides are together again and baste side seams. Stitch from bottom to top making sure tension on machine is free enough so as not to pucker the seams. Turn and press lightly on the satin side to make sharp edges. Close the top of pulpit or lectern hanging by pressing the raw seam allowance inward and slip stitch. Provide for anchoring by making a hem to fit a weighted rod or sew snap-on tape on the satin lining.

Bible ribbons of brocade are treated in the same manner as above with a narrow hem to hold weighted brass registers. If grosgrain ribbon is used the drop end hem must be deep enough to cover the symbol stitching on the back of the ribbon. Usually a hem of five to seven inches is sufficient and is turned up after the symbols are sewn in place. The fringe, placed last, is attached at the bottom fold so it extends below the ribbon, and is sewed on both back and front sides to give weight and body to the ribbon.

The same instructions apply to making the Altar frontlet as for the other hangings except for the top hem. To provide a sag-free means of hanging the frontlet, it may be attached to the linen cloth under the fair linen. With right sides together pin the linen cloth and the brocade frontlet the extent of the front of the Altar. Stitch in place and press. Turn seam allowance on satin lining inward catching with a slip stitch where attached to the linen cloth. Top edges of the two ends which extend around the Altar are pressed inward and closed with a slip stitch, and then attached by hand to each end of the linen cloth.

If the minister wears a stole, the Altar Guild may want to make these in seasonal colors from material matching the paraments. A stole is a long, narrow band made of fine material and draped about the neck over the ministerial gown. It is of variable width, the narrowest part being at the back of the neck. The stole is symbolic of the yoke of Christ and of submission and obedience. Because a stole requires a long piece of material it is difficult to cut from the yardage for the paraments, and therefore proves less expensive in most instances if purchased in a pre-cut kit. This service is available from some church furnishing houses for an added ten percent of the cost of the material, and is easily assembled.

To work on Altar paarments is a rewarding experience as new beauty and symbolism are created in fine fabrics. The sense of satisfaction in doing and the new insight into learning and understanding, are aids in themselves to meditation and worship.



First Methodist Church, Clermont, Florida

Chapter XII

Training of Acolytes

There is a return in Protestant worship, to our Reformation heritage. Increased order, reverence and beauty, is one result. Other results indicate confusion, due to inadequate training and lack of understanding.

Since early church history, boys of confirmation age, or from ten to thirteen years, have been called into service to assist in services of public worship, and the work of these servers, who are called acolytes, can be a very meaningful experience, not only for the youth involved, but for his family and for the future ministry of the church.

To the pastor belongs the privilege of selecting and training his acolytes. Their close work with the pastor affords a fruitful field for evangelism, and offers an opportunity to help boys become churchmen. The training of acolytes is very important. The training process could perhaps begin with the use of two film strips,—one, "Christian Symbolism" and the other, "The Church at Worship". These film strips may have to be repeated several times so that the boys will be thoroughly familiar with church symbolism. The minister should be careful in helping the boys to understand the meaning of the church seasons and all the special days in the church year, and the colors to be used on the altar, pulpit, and lectern during the different tseasons. The training period should also include instructions in the meaning of reverence, the importance of order and neatness.

An altar guild member needs to be nearby to aid in their care and guidance. Young men outgrow robes and can develop slovenly habits once they know their duties.

How many Acolytes should be used? The size of the chancel, frequency of the worship services, and the desire of the pastor

regarding the areas of service of the acolyte are determining factors. Usually a one hour service requires one acolyte. Four acolytes used on rotation basis could be adequate for the church year for the average church. Emphasis is always on quality rather than quantity.

A Crucifer is usually an older and larger boy. It helps if he is large in stature, to carry the processional cross with dignity. Flag and banner bearers should likewise be older boys.

Here is a suggested check list for the acolyte on the day he serves.

- Arrive at least ten minutes before the appointed hour of worship.
- Shoes shined, hair combed, and toilet needs tended to before he proceeds to the Sacristy.
- Check the candlelighter to see that the taper is of sufficient length.
- Checks with Altar Guild representative for vesting.
- Bring candlelighter with him to appointed meeting place with pastor.
- Shares with pastor in devotions.
- Goes to work.
- Conduct in the chancel is reverent, quiet, and courteous.
- Participates in the service with other worshippers.
- After extinguishing candles, he takes proper care of his vestments.
- Always leaves acolyte material as he would want to find them.
- He is an aid at Baptism, and arrives a half hour prior to the set time for weddings. The acolyte, rather than ushers, cares for the candles at weddings.

Movements in the Chancel

With lighted candlelighter in hand, he closes the door behind him; he moves with promptness but unhurried steps to the center front of the altar. It helps to fix his gaze upon the cross, thinking of Christ, our Lord.

Lighting candles is simple for a small altar. Pivot to the right, light the candle and then pivot to the left. A larger altar requires movement to the right side first, then across to the left; extinguish the taper after drawing the lighter close to your body to avoid wax falling on the fair linen. There should be a definite place in the chancel for the candlelighter during the service.

There are times when the acolyte is used in the service of Holy Communion, to shift individual communion glasses, or to carry the tray as the pastor serves the elements. These duties, of course, are under the direction of the pastor.

Vestments

Simple vestments that set the acolyte apart from the choir or clergy are desirable. These vary with denominational emphasis. A short white cotta over a black cassock is popular. Some young men prefer the simple white alb, loose fitting, long sleeves, with waist cord. Bright colors call too much attention to the acolyte.

Thoughts to Help the Acolyte

1. Before the altar prior to lighting the candles: Jesus said; "I am the light of the world."
2. Completion of lighting candles: "You do not light a candle and put it under a cover, but on a lamp stand that it may give light to the whole house."
3. After extinguishing candle: "Let *your* light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven."

Acolyte training can be a very effective educational program. Some churches use stages of training prior to becoming an acolyte. These are often called "postulant" and "probationer." At each stage they are given a symbol such as silver cross, or gold cross on different colors of ribbon. A schedule of training for each stage prepares them for the high honor of being an acolyte. This program can include a brief denominational history, the Book of Worship, Meaning of the Ritual for Holy Communion, and the Symbols of the Christian Church.

Why do Methodists have acolytes? As an aid to the congregation in the hour of public praise. There are many courtesies in public worship that a pastor cannot adequately care for. They prove a real inspiration to the youth of the church. Children and youth realize that the worship service is truly for them, for they share in its function.

APPENDIX

Ready made paraments and material for making such may be obtained from the following companies:

1. The Methodist Publishing House (order from the one supplying your territory).
2. The Methodist Book Room, 1707-1708 Arch St., Philadelphia 3, Pa.
3. Ecclesiastical Arts Catalog, The United Lutheran Publication House.
4. Church Furnishings, Whittemore Associates, Inc., 16 Ashburton Place, Boston 8, Mass.
5. Vestments, Morehouse-Gorham Co., 14 E. 41st St., New York 17, New York.
6. National Church Goods Supply Co., 821-823 Arch St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.
7. J. P. Redington and Co., Scranton 2, Pa.
8. J. Theodore Cuthbertson, Inc., 2013 Sanson St., Philadelphia 3, Pa.

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GLOSSARY

Acolyte—A server: a lay assistant, often a boy, one of whose functions is to light and extinguish the candles on the altar.

Altar—The Holy Table: the Communion Table: a place of prayer.

Altar Desk—The small backrest of wood or metal placed on the altar for the ritual.

Altar Guild—A committee of women whose chief activity is devoted to service of the altar.

Amen—(from the Hebrew for "Verily") A response said or sung at end of prayers, signifying approval of what preceded.

Antependium—A hanging for the front of the Altar, Pulpit and Lectern.

Ascription—Scripture used at the close of the sermon to acknowledge the source of power and truth.

Baptistry or Baptistery—The place where the baptismal font is located, or in churches that practice immersion, a large pool set into a platform in some part of the building.

Benediction—The short blessing by a minister by which public worship is closed.

Canticle—A song or hymn taken from the Bible.

Cassock—The long garment worn by the minister. There are two styles commonly in use: the Roman style, which is buttoned down the front, and the Anglican, which is buttoned down the side.

Catholic—Universal, worldwide, ecumenical, pertaining to the universal and age-long practice of the church.

Cere-cloth—One of the three traditional cloths laid upon the altar. It is waxed, designed to protect the fair linen from the dampness and moisture of the stone altar top.

Chalice—A cup of gold or silver, used at Holy Communion.

Chancel—The East end, so called, of a church, raised above the nave and containing the choir and sanctuary.

Chapel—A building or portion of one used for worship functions of an occasional nature.

Choir—The Choirsters; also the part of the chancel between the nave and sanctuary.

Church, The—(a) The Body of Christ; (b) the House of God; that building set apart by formal dedication to the worship of Almighty God.

Church Year, The—The Christian Year; the year arranged by the church for commemoration of our Lord's life and work, and for remembrance of the great events in the history of the church.

Cincture—A wide flat girdle of cloth worn around the waist over the cassock, by the clergy.

Collect—A short comprehensive prayer. Term arose in second and third century when Christians "collected together" at an appointed place and were sent on their way to worship with a prayer said by the pastor.

Communion Table—Literally the table from which the Holy Communion is served; ie, the altar.

Corporal—A square linen cloth used upon the altar for communion.

Corporate Worship—United worship by a congregation of believers.

Cruet—Receptacle for wine and water.

Crucifix—A cross with the representation of our Lord's body (corpus) upon it.

Dossal or Dorsal—A permanent curtain or hanging of rich fabric behind the altar or Communion Table.

Doxology—A short hymn of Praise to God.

East End of a Church—The end where the altar stands, even if not actually in the east.

Elements—The materials used in the Sacrament appointed by Christ; bread and wine.

Epistle Side—The side of the altar from which the Epistle is read, the right as the congregation sees it.

Eucharist—"Thanksgiving"; the Holy Communion.

Fair Linen—The principal covering of the altar.

Font—The receptacle of stone, metal or wood which holds the water for baptism.

Flagon—A large, covered glass or metal container for a reserve of wine.

Frontal—A covering of cloth that hangs before the altar, covering the entire front.

Frontlet or Super-frontal—A short cover for the front of the altar, extending the full length of the altar.

Gloria—An ascription of praise, especially the Gloria in Excelsis and Gloria Patri; a musical setting of these.

Gospel Side—The side of the altar from which the gospel is read, the left as the congregation sees it.

Gothic—A style of ecclesiastical architecture chiefly characterized by the pointed arch.

Gradine—A shelf behind the altar upon which the cross, candles and flowers are placed. It is also called a re-table.

Hosanna—A Hebrew word meaning, "Save, we beseech Thee".

Hymn—A sacred ode expressive of praise or adoration.

Invocation—A prayer calling upon divine assistance or guidance.

Lectern—A desk or stand, of wood or metal, on which the Bible rests and from which the lessons are read at worship services.

Lectionary—Scriptural readings for The Christian Year.

Litany—A solemn responsive form of supplication.

Liturgy—(Gr. for public service) The ritual of the church especially with reference to Holy Communion.

Liturgical Colors—The colors of the Christian Year. White, red, green, violet (or purple) and black.

Mensa—The top of the altar.

Narthex—The vestibule or closed in portion across the building at the rear of the nave.

Nave—The central division of the church in which the congregation is seated.

Pall—The cover for a coffin.

Paraments—A word used to designate the hangings and linens used in the sanctuary.

Pastor—(From L. for "Shepherd", "feeder" "giver of pasture")—A shepherd of souls, a minister placed in charge of the spiritual care of a congregation or parish.

Postlude—Music played after the conclusion of Divine worship.

Prie-dieu—(Fr. for "Pray God") A small desk arranged to support a book or books and with a foot-piece on which to kneel.

Prelude—Music played before the opening of Divine worship.

Processional—The entrance in due order by the clergy and choir at the beginning of a church service. Usually a processional hymn is sung while entering.

Protecting Cloth—A cloth placed over the fair linen when there is not a service, to protect linen from dust and dirt.

Recessional—The retiring of the clergy and the choir, usually accompanied by singing of a hymn, at the close of a church service.

Reredos—The back of the altar. It is usually of wood or stone, often made elaborate with sculpture, carvings and paintings.

Re-table—A low shelf in the reredos.

Ritual—The prescribed order observed in conducting a service. The outward form of an inward faith.

Sacrament—A divine ordinance, observed by the church in obedience to Christ's command, which possesses an "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," e.g. Baptism and Holy Communion.

Sacristy—A room near the sanctuary where Communion vessels, linens and vestments are kept.

Server—An acolyte.

Stole—A narrow band of silk or brocade worn over the shoulders of the clergy.

Surplice—A white linen vestment worn by the clergy over the cassock.

Symbol—A visible illustration of an abstract Christian truth.

Transepts—The extensions from the sides of a church, resembling arms of a cross.

Triptych—A painting or carving or three such, on three panels, usually hinged, often used behind an altar as a reredos.

Vestments—Ecclesiastical garments worn for church services, also coverings for the altar, pulpit and lectern.

Wafer—A thin disk of unleavened bread, usually stamped with a cross or IHS and used for the bread of Holy Communion.

Worship—The ascription and rendering of reverent homage to God; Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

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